

THE VICTORY SERIES FOR INDIAN STUDENTS NO. 2

IVANHOE

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

ABRIDGED AND SIMPLIFIED

BY

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THE VICTORY SERIES FOR INDIAN STUDENTS

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PREFACE

The object of this book is to provide an edition of a famous romance suitable for the use of Indian boys reading for the School Leaving and other similar examinations.

The novels of Scott are in their original form too long for this purpose, and must therefore be abridged. The language is also rather too difficult for the Indian school-boy to proceed without constant reference to a dictionary and voluminous notes, and he ends by paying more attention to the latter than to the original text and the subject-matter of the book.

In this edition an attempt has been made to meet this difficulty by removing most of the archaisms and other expressions which cause trouble to the school-boy reader, or are obviously unsuitable for imitation in the writing of modern English. If it is made unnecessary for the reader to waste much time on notes, he can devote himself to the story himself.

The Introduction gives an account of the literary career of Scott and the chief features of his work, and a description of the historical background of the romance of *Ivanhoe*. A number of notes are added to explain such technical terms as *Barbican*, *Templar*, etc., which cannot well be discarded.

E. SMITH.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh in 1771. He was the son of a solicitor ; and after leaving the High School, studied law in the University of Edinburgh. Much of his boyhood, however, was spent at his grandfather's home in the Border country ; and here he must have listened to many legends about the raids and warlike expeditions which had taken place near the Border between England and Scotland.

Although he led an active life he was from boyhood very fond of reading. He read Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, with its poetical tales of ideal knights and ladies, and its bright romantic colouring. Above all he loved the old ballads which told of the wild life of the Border. But he always read eagerly any tale of romance and adventure ; and in particular he was interested in history. "To the Romances and Poetry which I chiefly delighted in I had always added the study of history, especially as connected with military events." When he was ill he used to arrange "shells and pebbles so as to represent encountering armies" ; particularly when he was reading a history of the *Knights of Malta*—"a book," he says, "which, as it hovered between history and romance, was exceedingly dear to me."

Scott practised at the bar for some years, and was afterwards (1799) Sheriff of Selkirkshire and in 1807 Clerk to the Court of Session at Edinburgh. But he devoted much of his time to reading and writing, for he could not give up his literary interests. His romantic tastes were shown by his translations of some German ballads, and by the publication in 1802 of his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. This was composed of historical and legendary ballads, with some imitations of his own.

Out of another imitation grew the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. When this was published in 1805 it won immediate popularity, and its success brought to an end whatever hesitation Scott may have had in devoting himself to literature.

In 1808 and 1810 appeared his two great poetical romances, *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*. Others which followed were, however, not so successful. Scott therefore directed his energies to prose fiction, and in 1814 finished *Waverley*, which he had started nine years earlier. This was the first of a series of twenty-nine romances which earned for him recognition as the greatest novelist of the world.

Scott is particularly famous as being the first great writer of historical novels. A historical novel is one in which some of the important persons and scenes and actions are taken from history.

Scott first took Scottish history, as in *Waverley*, *The Abbott*, and *A Legend of Montrose*. Then he turned to English history, in *Ivanhoe*, *the Talisman*, *Kenilworth*, and *Woodstock*; and later to Continental History, as in *Quentin Durward* and *Anne of Geierstein*.

As Carlyle said, "These historical novels have taught this truththat the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols [i.e., documents], state papers, controversies, and abstractions of men." Scott was not always correct in historical details, and he ignored strict chronology when it suited his purpose; for his aim was not to represent the events of history as they actually occurred but to base romance upon history—to mingle the two, to give his narrative the additional interests of historical persons, scenes, and events.

Ivanhoe was published in 1820. It is a fine, spirited tale of adventure and heroic exploits, full of brisk movement and action. In it he gives us lively pictures of many sides of English life in the twelfth century from Saxon hall to Norman castle—swineherd and knight, Jew and Prior, outlaw and king; he describes in minute detail customs, dress, arms and armour, the siege of a castle, fights in the forest, tournaments, and a trial by combat; and skilful use is always made of the contrast between Saxons and Normans. But it is in his novels of Scottish character that we have Scott's best work. Some, like *Old Mortality* have a historical background;

others, like the *Antiquary*, have not. In either case we find a truer pathos and humour, for Scott had a deeper sympathy with and understanding of his own people. For these novels he drew his knowledge not from books but from life itself.

He made immense profits from the romances which he wrote at the rate of about two a year ; and was able to satisfy his ambition of building a splendid house in mediæval style at Abbotsford. In 1820 he was made a baronet, but five years later the publishing firm of the Ballantynes, of which he was a "sleeping" partner, went bankrupt. Scott had a most scrupulous sense of honour, and, though it was not strictly necessary for him to do so, set to work to pay off the debts of over £ 100,000 (15 lakhs of rupees). His health gave way in the attempt and he died in 1832.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF 'IVANHOE'

In the century and a half following the year 449 A. D. Britain was conquered by various tribes—Jutes, Angles, and Saxons—from the north-west of Germany. Very gradually they united, and the country was called England; but other nations usually called all the inhabitants Saxons.

From the end of the eighth century the coasts of England and France were ravaged by Northmen from Norway and Denmark. Danes settled in large portions of England, and for a short time there were Danish kings. The Northmen who settled in France were called Normans; they rapidly mingled with and adopted the civilisation of the Franks whom they conquered, and became a very strong and accomplished people.

In 1066 England was invaded by Normans under their bold but capable Duke, William the Conqueror, who became King William I of England.

The barons and knights who came over and fought for him had to be rewarded with grants of land; they became in effect local rulers, built strong castles, and often treated the Saxons in their district very oppressively. This confiscation of lands was a particular cause of discontent to those who were turned out, in addition to the general hatred felt by all Saxons for their Norman conquerors. The kings who followed William I set themselves to check the power of the barons, and several of them did a great deal towards establishing good government. The oppression of the Saxons came far more from the barons, or great landowners, than from the kings, whose policy was to preserve as many English laws and local customs as possible. Henry I., the younger son of the Conqueror, married a Saxon lady.

The Normans however were fond of hunting deer in the forests, and, to secure the preservation of game for their own pleasure, severe Forest Laws were passed by the early kings and rigorously enforced by their successors. These undoubtedly increased the

number of outlaws — men who left their homes in order to escape punishment for crimes of which they were, justly or unjustly, accused.

One of the ablest of the foreign kings was Henry II, who from 1100 to 1154 A. D. ruled not only over England and Normandy, but over Anjou and the greater part of France. He was succeeded by his son Richard who was called "The Lion-Hearted." Richard I was a brave and skilful soldier, and he was away from England during the greater part of his reign, leading the Third Crusade—an attempt to win back Jerusalem for the Christians of Europe out of the hands of Saladin, Sildan of the Seljuk Turks. Most of the other leaders, such as Philip, king of France, and Leopold, Duke of Austria, quarrelled with Richard, and deserted him. Finally Richard was forced to make an honourable treaty with Saladin, by which Christian pilgrims were allowed to go to Jeursalem. On his way back he was ship-wrecked, fell into the hands of his Austrian enemy, and was imprisoned for over a year. A large ransom was raised, and Richard returned to England in March 1194.

Meanwhile, encouraged by Philip II of France, his younger brother, John of Anjou, and a number of barons in England were conspiring against him.

This was the historical state of affairs which forms the background of the novel. Other characteristics of the age illustrated in it are :—

- (1) the hatred and suspicion of the Jews, who grew rich by money-lending at high rates of interest, but were often cruelly treated ;
- (2) the love of tournaments or competitions of knights in warlike exercises, particularly in tilting or riding at each other with levelled lances ;
- (3) the custom of trial by combat, based on the idea that God would give victory to innocent persons, or to their champions.

SHAKSPERE
HIS MIND AND ART

IVANHOE.

CHAPTER I.

IN that pleasant district of England which lies about the river Don, there was once a large forest, covering the greater part of the country between Sheffield and Doncaster. Parts of this forest of Sherwood still remain ; and here flourished in the middle ages those bands of gallant outlaws, whose deeds have been made so popular in English ballads.

Such being the chief scene of our story, the time is at the end of the reign of Richard I. Richard had been shipwrecked and taken prisoner on his way back from Palestine, and his subjects in England were the victims of much oppression. The power of the Norman barons had grown in his long absence ; they fortified their castles, collected large bands of paid followers, and reduced to subjection all the Saxons in their district.

The situation of the inferior Saxon gentry, or Franklins, as they were called, who, by the law and spirit of the English constitution, were entitled to hold themselves independent of feudal tyranny, became now unusually difficult. If they placed themselves under the protection of any of the tyrannical barons in their vicinity, accepted feudal duties on his estates, or bound themselves by mutual treaties of alliance and protection to support him in his enterprises, they might indeed purchase temporary peace ; but it must be with the sacrifice of that independence which was so dear to every English heart, and at the certain hazard of being involved in whatever rash expedition the ambition of

their protector might lead him to undertake. On the other hand, such were the means of vexation and oppression possessed by the great Barons, that they never lacked the pretext, and seldom the will, to harass any of their less powerful neighbours who attempted to free themselves from their authority, and to trust for their protection, during the dangers of the times, to their own inoffensive conduct, and to the laws of the land. There were however very few even of this inferior class of Saxon land-owners.

At court, and in the castles of the great nobles, where the pomp and state of a court was imitated, Norman-French was the only language employed ; in courts of law, the pleadings and judgments were delivered in the same tongue. In short, French was the language of honour, of chivalry, and even of justice ; while the far more manly and expressive Anglo-Saxon was left to the use of rustics. Still, however, the necessary intercourse between the lords of the soil, and those oppressed inferior beings by whom that soil was cultivated, occasioned the gradual formation of a dialect, compounded of French and Anglo-Saxon, in which they could render themselves intelligible to each other ; and from this necessity arose by degrees our present English language, in which the speech of the victors and that of the vanquished have been so happily blended together ; and which has since been so richly improved by importations from the classical languages, and from those spoken by the southern nations of Europe.

This state of things I have thought it necessary to explain for the information of the general reader, who might be apt to forget, that, although no great historical events, such as war or insurrection, occurred, yet the great national distinctions betwixt the Saxons and their conquerors, continued, down to the reign of Edward the Third, to keep open the wounds which the Conquest

had inflicted, and to maintain a line of separation betwixt the descendants of the victor Normans and the vanquished Saxons.

The sun was setting upon one of the rich grassy glades of that forest of Sherwood which we have mentioned in the beginning of the chapter. Hundreds of wide-branched oaks flung their gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious greensward; in some places they were intermingled with beeches, hollies, and copsewood of various descriptions, so closely as totally to intercept the level beams of the sinking sun.

Two human beings completed this landscape. The eldest of them had a stern, savage, and wild aspect. His garment was of the simplest form imaginable, being a close jacket with sleeves, composed of the tanned skin of some animal, and reached from the throat to the knees. Sandals, bound with thongs made of boar's hide, protected the feet, and a roll of thin leather was twined around the legs, and, ascending above the calf, left the knees bare like those of a Scottish Highlander. To make the jacket sit yet more closely to the body, it was gathered at the middle by a broad leathern belt, secured by a brass buckle, to one side of which was attached a sort of pouch, and to the other a ram's horn. In the same belt was stuck a long, broad, sharp-pointed, and two-edged knife. The man had no covering upon his head, which was only protected by his own thick hair, matted and twisted together, and scorched by the sun into a rusty, dark-red colour. Round his neck was a brass ring resembling a dog's collar, on which was engraved, in Saxon characters, "Gurth, the son of Beowulph, is the born thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood."

Beside the swineherd, for such was Gurth's occupation, was seated a person about ten years younger, and whose dress, though resembling his companion's in form, was of other materials, and of a more fantastic appearance. His jacket had been stained a bright purple hue, with grotesque ornaments in different colours.

He had thin silver bracelets upon his arm, and on his neck a collar of the same metal, bearing the inscription, "Wamba, the son of Witless, is the thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood." He had the same sort of sandals as his companion, but instead of leather thongs round his legs he had gaiters of cloth, one yellow and the other red. His cap had attached to it several bells, which jingled whenever he moved his head. His unusual dress and half-crazed, half-cunning expression of face showed that he was a jester, a servant kept to amuse his master by songs and tales, jokes and tricks. He was evidently not trusted with a knife, but carried a wooden sword, which made him look still more foolish.

The two men were as different in manner and expression as they were in dress. Gurth was sullen and despondent, like one who is oppressed; Wamba seemed, however, quite self-satisfied. Their conversation was carried on in Anglo-Saxon, which, as we said before, was universally spoken by the inferior classes, excepting the Norman soldiers, and the immediate personal dependants of the great feudal nobles. Its substance was as follows:

"A curse upon these infernal pigs!" said the swineherd, after blowing his horn to collect together the scattered herd of swine, which made, however, no haste to remove themselves from the luxurios banquet of acorns on which they had fattened.

"Some two-legged wolf," he continued, meaning some Norman, "will carry off some of them, unless I can drive them home before nightfall. Wamba, up and help me if thou art a man."

"No," said Wamba, "my legs refuse to carry my gay garments through those marshes. I advise thee to leave the herd to their fate, which, in any case, is to be converted into Normans, so relieving thee of trouble."

"How can pigs become Normans, and so relieve me of trouble?" asked Gurth.

"Why, what do you call those grunting brutes running about on their four legs?" demanded Wamba.

"Swine, fool, swine," said the herd, "every fool knows that."

"And swine is good Saxon," said the Jester; "but what do you call the sow when she is skinned and quartered, and hung up by the heels?"

"Pork," answered the swineherd.

"I am very glad every fool knows that too," said Wamba, "and pork, I think, is good Norman-French; and so when the brute lives, and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is killed and roasted. In the same way Saxon ox becomes Norman beef, and Saxon calf becomes Norman veal when they are killed and made ready for the table."

The approach of a terrible thunderstorm made them hurry towards home, driving before them the herd, which they had rapidly collected. They were overtaken on the road by a party of horsemen, of whom the two who rode foremost seemed to be persons of considerable importance, and the others their attendants.

It was not difficult to ascertain the condition and character of one of these personages. He was obviously a priest of high rank. His dress was that of a Cistercian monk, but composed of materials much finer than those which the rule of that order admitted. His mantle and hood were of the best Flanders cloth, and fell in ample, and not ungraceful folds around a somewhat corpulent person. His face showed no signs of self-denial, nor did his clothes show that he despised worldly splendour, for they were lined with rich furs and fastened with golden clasps.

This worthy churchman rode upon a well-fed mule, whose saddle was highly decorated, and whose bridle, according to the

fashion of the day, was ornamented with silver bells. In his seat he had nothing of the awkwardness of a monk, but displayed the easy and habitual grace of a well-trained horseman. Indeed, he only used a mule for travelling on the road, and one of his followers led a fine Spanish horse which was evidently kept for hunting.

The prior, raising his voice, and using the mixed language in which the Norman and Saxon races conversed with each other, asked, "Is there in this neighbourhood any good man, who, for the love of God, and devotion to Mother Church, will give two of her humblest servants, with their train, a night's hospitality and refreshment?"

This question was answered by Wamba.

"If the reverend fathers," he said, "loved good food and comfortable lodging, a few miles of riding would carry them to the Priory of Brinxworth, where their rank could not but secure them a good reception. But if they preferred spending a penitential evening, they might turn down yonder wild glade, which would bring them to the hermitage of Copmanhurst, where a pious hermit would make them sharers for the night of the shelter of his roof and the benefit of his prayers."

The prior shook his head at both proposals.

"Tell us," said the armed rider, breaking in with a high and stern voice, "if thou canst, the road to—what was the name of your franklin, Prior Aymer?"

"Cedric," answered the prior; "Cedric the Saxon.—Tell me, good fellow, are we near his dwelling, and can you show us the road?"

"The road will be hard to find," answered Gurth, who broke silence for the first time, "and the family of Cedric retire early to rest."

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“ Tush, tell me not so, fellow,” said the military rider ; “ 'tis easy for them to arise and supply the wants of travellers such as we are, who will not stoop to beg the hospitality which we have a right to command.”

“ I know not,” said Gurth sullenly, “ if I should show the way to my master's house, to those who demand as a right the shelter which most ask as a favour.”

“ Do you dispute with me, slave ?” said the soldier ; and, setting spurs to his horse, he raised his riding whip with the purpose of chastising what he considered as the insolence of the peasant.

“ Nay, by Saint Mary, brother Brian, you must not think you are now in Palestine, predominating over Turks and Saracens.—Tell me, good fellow,” said the Prior to Wamba, and accompanied his speech with a small silver coin, “ the way to Cedric the Saxon's ; you cannot be ignorant of it, and it is your duty to direct the wanderer even when his character is less sanctified than ours.”

“ In truth, venerable father,” answered the jester, “ the Saracen head of your right reverend companion has frightened out of mine the way home—I am not sure I shall get there to-night myself.”

“ Tush,” said the Abbot, “ thou canst tell us if thou wilt. This reverend brother has been all his life engaged in fighting among the Saracens for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre ; he is of the order of Knights Templars, whom you may have heard of ; he is half a monk, half a soldier.”

“ If he is but half a monk,” said the Jester, “ he should not be wholly unreasonable with those whom he meets upon the road, even if they should be in no hurry to answer questions that no way concern them.”

“ I forgive thy wit,” replied the Abbot, “ on condition thou wilt show me the way to Cedric's mansion.”

The companion of the Church dignitary was a man past forty, thin, strong, tall, and muscular ; an athletic figure, which had endured a thousand toils, and was ready to endure a thousand more. His head was covered with a scarlet cap, faced with fur. His face, was therefore fully displayed, and its expression was calculated to impress a degree of awe, if not of fear, upon strangers.

His upper dress resembled that of his companion in shape, being a long monastic mantle ; but the colour, being scarlet, showed that he did not belong to any of the four regular orders of monks. On the right shoulder of the mantle there was cut, in white cloth, a cross of a peculiar form. This upper robe concealed what at first view seemed rather inconsistent with its form — a shirt of linked mail, with sleeves and gloves of the same ; and mail-hose, reaching from the ankle to the knee, effectually protected the legs, and completed the rider's defensive armour. In his girdle he wore a long and double-edged dagger, which was the only offensive weapon about his person.

He rode, not a mule, like his companion, but a strong ordinary riding horse for the road, to save his gallant war-horse, which a squire led behind, fully accoutred for battle, with a plaited head-piece upon his head, having a short spike projecting from the front. On one side of the saddle hung a short battle-axe, richly inlaid ; on the other the rider's plumed head-piece and hood of mail, with a long two-handed sword. A second squire carried his master's lance, from the extremity of which fluttered a small streamer, bearing a cross of the same form as that embroidered upon his cloak. He also carried his small triangular shield, broad enough at the top to protect the breast. It was covered with a scarlet cloth, which prevented the device from being seen.

These two squires were followed by two attendants—natives of some distant Eastern country. The whole appearance of this

warrior and his retinue was wild and outlandish ; the dress of his squires was gorgeous, and his Eastern attendants wore silver collars round their throats, and bracelets of the same metal upon their swarthy arms and legs. Silk and embroidery distinguished their dresses, and marked the wealth of their master ; forming, at the same time, a striking contrast with the martial simplicity of his own attire. They were armed with curved sabres, having the hilts inlaid with gold, and matched with Turkish daggers of yet more costly workmanship.

The singular appearance of this knight and his attendants excited the curiosity of Wamba and even of the sullen Garth ; for they had never before seen one of the Knights Templars, an order half religious and half-military—of knights who, like monks, took vows not to marry, and devoted themselves to the defence of the Temple of the Holy Sepulchre in Palestine, and of pilgrims who visited it. The monk then instantly knew to be the Prior of Jorvalux Abbey, well known for many miles around as a lover of hunting and banqueting and of other worldly pleasures still more inconsistent with his monastic vows. He was however pleasant and kindly, and, not being very strict, was therefore well-liked.

“ Well, then,” answered Wamba, “ your reverences must hold on this path till you come to a sunken cross, of which scarce a foot’s length remains above ground ; then take the path to the left, for there are four which meet at Sunken Cross, and I trust your reverences will obtain shelter before the storm comes on.” The Abbot thanked him ; and they rode on. As their horses’ hoofs died away, Garth said to his companion, “ If they follow thy wise direction, the reverend fathers will hardly reach Rotherwood this night.”

“ No,” said the Jester, grinning, “ but they may reach Sheffield if they have good luck, and that is as fit a place for them.

I am not so bad a woodsman as to show the dog where the deer lies, if I have no mind he should chase him."

"Thou art right," said Gurth; "it were ill that Aymer saw the Lady Rowena; and it were worse, it may be, for Cedric to quarrel, as is most likely he would, with this military monk. But, like good servants, let us hear and see, and say nothing."

Meanwhile the riders had soon left the bondsmen far behind them.

"What mean these fellows by their insolence?" said the Templar to the Prior, "and why did you prevent me from chas-
tising it?"

"First of all," replied to Prior, "beating this fellow could procure us no information respecting the road to Cedric's house; and secondly, it would have been sure to have established a quarrel between you and him had we found our way thither. Remember what I told you; this wealthy Franklin is proud, fierce, jealous, and irritable; a withstander of the nobility, and even of his neighbours, Reginald Front-de-Boeuf, and Philip Malvoisin, who are no babes to strive with. He stands up so sternly for the privileges of his race, and is so proud of his uninterrupted descent from Hereward, a renowned champion of the Saxon race, that he is universally called Cedric the Saxon; and makes a boast of his belonging to a people from whom many others endeavour to hide their descent."

"His daughter, the Lady Rowena, however, is very beautiful, you say?" continued the knight.

"Cedric is not her father," replied the Prior, "and is but of remote relation; she is descended from higher blood than even he pretends to, and is but distantly connected with him by birth. Her guardian, however, he is; but his ward is as dear to him as if she were his own child. Of her beauty you shall soon be judge."

Darkness had now fallen, and when they came to the sunken cross of which Wamba had spoken, they could not agree whether it was to the left or the right that they had been told to turn. Meanwhile they saw a man resting by the wayside, and asked him which was the road to Rotherwood, the house of Cedric the Saxon.

"I myself am bound thither," replied the stranger; "and if I had a horse, I would be your guide, for the way is somewhat intricate, though perfectly well known to me."

"Thou shalt have both thanks and reward, my friend," said the prior, "if thou wilt bring us to Cedric's in safety."

And he caused one of his attendants to mount his own led horse, and give that upon which he had hitherto ridden to the stranger, who was to serve for a guide.

Their conductor took an opposite road from that which Wamba had recommended for the purpose of misleading them. The path soon led deeper into the woodland, and crossed more than one brook, the approach to which was rendered perilous by the marshes through which it flowed; but the stranger seemed to know, as if by instinct, the soundest ground and the safest points of passage, and by dint of caution brought the party safely into a wilder avenue than any they had yet seen; and pointing to a large, low, irregular building at the upper extremity, he said to the prior, "Yonder is Rotherwood, the dwelling of Cedric the Saxon."

Prior Aymer had not yet had the curiosity to ask his guide a single question. But finding himself now at his ease and near shelter, he demanded of the guide who and what he was.

"A palmer, just returned from the Holy Land," was the answer.

"You had better have stayed these to fight for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre," said the Templar.

"True, reverend Sir Knight," answered the palmer, to whom the appearance of the Templar seemed perfectly familiar; "but when those who are under oath to recover the Holy City are found travelling at such a distance from the scene of their duties, can you wonder that a peaceful peasant like me should decline the task which they have abandoned?"

The Templar would have made an angry reply, but was interrupted by the prior, who expressed his astonishment that their guide, after such long absence, should be so perfectly acquainted with the paths of the forest.

"I was born a native of these parts," answered their guide, and as he made the reply they stood before the house of Cedric—a low, irregular building, containing several court-yards or enclosures, extending over a considerable space of ground. A deep fosse, or ditch, was drawn round the whole building, and filled with water from a neighbouring stream. There was an entrance from the west, which communicated by a drawbridge with a similar opening in the interior defences.

Before this entrance the Templar blew his horn loudly; for the rain, which had long threatened, began now to descend with great violence.

CHAPTER II.

IN a long, wide, but low hall a great unpolished oaken table, made of planks rough-hewn in the forest, stood ready prepared for the evening meal of the Saxon household. There was a huge fireplace at each end of the hall, but as the chimneys were constructed in a very clumsy manner, at least as much of the smoke found its way into the apartment as escaped by the proper vent. On the sides of the apartment hung implements of war and of the chase, and there were at each corner folding doors, which gave access to other parts of the extensive building.

The other appointments of the mansion partook of the rude simplicity of the Saxon period, which Cedric prided himself upon maintaining. The floor was composed of earth mixed with lime, trodden into a hard substance, such as is often employed in flooring our modern barns. For about one quarter of the length of the apartment, the floor was raised by a step, and this space, which was called the dais, was occupied only by the principal members of the family, and visitors of distinction. For this purpose, a table richly covered with scarlet cloth was placed transversely across the platform, from the middle of which ran the longer and lower board, at which the servants and inferior persons fed, down towards the bottom of the hall. The whole resembled the form of the letter T. Massive chairs and benches of carved oak were placed upon the dais, and over these seats was fastened a canopy of cloth, to give protection from the rain, which in some places found its way through the ill-constructed roof. The walls of this upper end of the hall were covered with hangings or curtains, and upon the floor there was a carpet. The lower table was uncovered by a cloth, and rude massive benches supplied the place of chairs.

In the centre of the upper table, were placed two chairs more elevated than the rest, for the master and mistress of the family. One of these seats was occupied by Cedric the Saxon, who though only a thane in rank, or, as the Normans called him, a Franklin, was an important man, and was impatient at the delay of his evening meal.

His face showed that he was frank, but of a hasty temper ; proud and jealous like one whose life has been spent in asserting rights which were constantly liable to be infringed. In body he was of medium size, broad-shouldered, long armed, and very strongly built, with the air of one accustomed to war and the chase. His long yellow hair was equally divided upon the top of his head, and combed down on each side to his shoulders ; it showed very little grey although Cedric was nearly in his sixtieth year.

His dress was a doublet, or coat, of green, with fur at the throat and cuffs, and under it was a close-fitting garment of red. He had breeches of the same material, which left the knees bare. On his feet he wore sandals like those of Gurth, but of finer leather and fastened with golden clasps. He had bracelets and a broad collar of gold. About his waist he wore a richly studded belt from which hung a short, straight, two-edged sword. Behind him was a cloak of scarlet cloth lined with fur, and an embroidered cap. A short boar-spear stood against his chair, to be used either as staff or weapon, as chance might require.

Two or three servants stood behind their master ; others waited in the lower part of the hall. Several grey-hounds and other hunting dogs waited with impatience for the arrival of supper.

Cedric was by no means in good temper. The Lady Rowena, who had been absent at a distant church, had but just returned, and was changing her garments. There were as yet no tidings

of Gurth and his herd, which should long since have been driven home from the forest ; and such was the insecurity of the period as to render it probable that the delay might be explained by some depredation of the outlaws, with whom the adjacent forest abounded, or by the violence of some neighbouring baron, whose consciousness of strength made him ignore the laws of property.

The matter was of consequence, for a great part of the wealth of the Saxon proprietors consisted in numerous herds of swine, especially in forest-land, where those animals easily found their food.

Besides these subjects of anxiety, the Saxon then was impatient for the presence of his favourite clown, Wamba, whose jests, such as they were, served for a sort of seasoning to his evening meal. Add to all this, Cedric had fasted since noon, and his usual supper hour was long past. His displeasure was expressed in broken sentences, partly muttered to himself, partly addressed to the domestics who stood around : “ Why is the Lady Rowena late ? ”

“ She is but changing her dress,” replied a female attendant ; “ you would not wish her to sit down to the meal in her riding-dress.”

“ But what,” continued he, turning to the cup-bearer, “ what keeps Gurth and Wamba out so long ? I shall hear, I guess that my property has been carried off by those Norman thieves, Front-de-Boeuf and Malvoisin, my neighbours.” “ But I will be avenged,” he added, starting from his chair in impatience at the supposed injury, and catching hold of his boar-spear ; “ I will go with my complaint to the great council ; I have friends, I have followers—man to man I will challenge the Normans in the lists ; let them come in armour and mail, and all that can render coward so bold ; I have sent such a jayelin—as this through a stronger fence than three of their war shields !—

Perhaps they think me old ; but they shall find that, alone and childless as I am, the blood of Hereward is in the veins of Cedric.—Ah, Wilfred, Wilfred ! ” he exclaimed, in a lower tone, “ couldst thou have ruled thy unreasonable love for a princess whom thou canst not aspire to marry, thy father had not been left in his old age to fight alone against his foes ! ” The reflection seemed to calm him. Replacing his javelin, he resumed his seat, and appeared to be absorbed in melancholy reflection.

From his musing, Cedric was suddenly awakened by the blast of a horn, which was replied to by the clamorous yells and barking of all the dogs in the hall, and some twenty or thirty which were quartered in other parts of the building.

“ To the gate, knaves ! ” said the Saxon hastily, as soon as the tumult was so much calmed that the dependants could hear his voice. “ See what tidings that horn tells us of ! ”

Retaining in less than three minutes, a servant announced “ that the Prior Aymer of Jervaulx, and the good knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, commander of the valiant and venerable order of Knights Templars, with a small retinue, requested hospitality and lodgings for the night, being on their way to a tournament which was to be held not far from Ashby-de-la-Zouche, on the second day from the present.”

“ Aymer, the Prior Aymer ! Brian de Bois-Guilbert ! ”—muttered Cedric ; “ Normans both ;—but, Norman or Saxon, the hospitality of Rotherwood must make them welcome, since they have chosen to halt—more welcome would they have been to have ridden farther on their way.—But it would be unworthy to murmur for a night’s lodgings and a night’s food.—Go, Hundebert,” he added to a steward who stood behind him with a white wand ; “ say to them that Cedric would himself bid them welcome, but he is under a vow never to step more than three steps from the dais of his own hall to meet any who shares not the blood of Saxon

royalty. Begone ! see them carefully tended ; let them not say in their pride, the Saxon churl has shown at once his poverty and his avarice. "Elgitha," he added, "let thy Lady Rowena know we shall not this night expect her in the hall, unless such be her especial pleasure."

"But it will be her especial pleasure," answered Elgitha, with great readiness, "for she is ever desirous to hear the latest news from Palestine."

Cedric darted at her a glance of hasty resentment ; but Rowena and whatever belonged to her, were privileged and secure from his anger. He only replied, "Silence, maiden. Say my message to thy mistress, and let her do her pleasure. Here, at least, the descendant of Alfred still reigns a princess." Elgitha left the apartment.

"Palestine!" repeated the Saxon : "Palestine ! how many ears are turned to the tales which crusaders, or pilgrims, bring from that fatal land ! I too might listen with a beating heart to fables which the wily strollers devise to cheat us into hospitality—but no—the son who has disobeyed me is no longer mine ; nor will I concern myself more for his fate than for that of any other Saxon who has followed Norman ways and a Norman King."

He knit his brows, and fixed his eyes for an instant on the ground ; as he raised them, the folding doors at the bottom of the hall were opened and, preceded by the steward with his wand, the guests entered the apartment.

These two dignified persons were followed by their respective attendants, and by their guide, whose figure had nothing more remarkable than it derived from the usual dress of a pilgrim. A cloak or mantle of coarse black serge, enveloped his whole body. Coarse sandals, bound with thongs, on his bare feet ; a broad and shadowy hat, and a long staff shod with iron, to the upper end of which was attached a branch of palm, completed the palmer's attire. He

followed modestly the last of the train which entered the hall, and, observing that the lower table scarcely afforded room sufficient for the domestics of Cedric and the retinue of his guests, he withdrew to a bench placed beside and almost under one of the large chimneys, and seemed to employ himself in drying his garments, until the retreat of some one should make room at the table, or the hospitality of the steward should supply him with refreshments in the place he had chosen apart.

CHAPTER III.

CEDRIC rose to receive his guests with an air of dignified hospitality, and, descending from the dais, or elevated part of his hall, made three steps towards them, and then awaited their approach.

“I grieve,” he said, “reverend prior, that my vow binds me to advance no farther upon this floor of my fathers, even to receive such guests as you, and this valiant Knight of the Holy Temple. But my steward has explained to you the cause of my seeming discourtesy.” Motioning with his hand, he caused his guests to take two seats a little lower than his own, but placed close beside him, and gave a signal that the evening meal should be placed upon the board.

When the repast was about to commence, the steward, suddenly raising his wand, said aloud,—“Stop!—Place for the Lady Rowena.” A side-door at the upper end of the hall now opened behind the banquet-table, and Rowena, followed by four female attendants, entered the apartment. Cedric, though surprised, hastened to meet her, and to conduct her with respectful ceremony, to the elevated seat at his own right hand, appropriated to the lady of the mansion. All stood up to receive her; and, replying to their courtesy by a mute gesture of salutation, she moved gracefully forward to assume her place at the table.

Accustomed only to act upon the immediate impulse of his own wishes, Brian de Bois-Guilbert kept his eyes riveted on the Saxon beauty.

When Rowena perceived the Knight Templar’s eyes turned on her, she drew with dignity the veil around her face, as an

intimation that the bold freedom of his glance was disagreeable. Cedric saw the motion and its cause. "Sir Templar," said he, "our Saxon maidens are not accustomed to be stared at by bold and unmannerly men."

The Knight asked for the Lady Rowena's pardon, and the Prior turned the conversation to another subject by hoping that she would be accompanying Cedric to watch the tournament at Ashby, and suggested that as the roads were unsafe they should travel under the escort of Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert and his followers.

"Sir Prior," answered Cedric, "wherever I have travelled, I have hitherto never found myself, with the assistance of my good sword and faithful followers, in need of other aid. At present, if we journey to Ashby-de-la-Zouche, we do so with my noble neighbour and countryman Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and with such a train as would set outlaws and enemies at defiance.—I drink to you, Sir Prior, in this cup of wine, which I trust your taste will approve, and I thank you for your courtesy."

At this moment Rowena with dignity, and without unveiling herself, asked the Templar for the latest news from Palestine.

"I have little of importance to say, lady," answered Sir Brian, "excepting the confirmed tidings of a truce with Saladin."

He was interrupted by Wamba, who, as jester, was allowed great freedom of speech, and could presume on everyone's tolerance. "These truces," he said, "make an old man of me!"

"Go to, knave, how so?" said Cedric, his features prepared to receive favourably the expected jest.

"Because," answered Wamba, "I remember three of them in my day, each of which was to endure for the course of fifty years; so that, by computation, I must be at least a hundred and fifty years old."

"I will warrant you do not die of old age, however," said the Templar, who now recognised his friend of the forest; "or any death but a violent one, if you give such directions to wayfarers, as you did this night to the prior and me."

"What is this, knave!" said Cedric; "misdirect travellers? We must have you whipped; you are at least as much rogue as fool."

"I pray thee, uncle," answered the jester, "let my folly, for once, protect my roguery. I did but make a mistake between my right hand and my left; and he who took a fool for his counsellor and guide might have pardoned a greater mistake."

Conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the porter's page, who announced that there was a stranger at the gate, imploring admittance and hospitality.

"Admit him," said Cedric, "be he who or what he may. Let his wants be ministered to with all care--look to it, Oswald."

And the steward left the banqueting-hall to see the commands of his patron obeyed. Returning soon after, Oswald whispered into the ear of his master, "It is a Jew, who calls himself Isaac of York; is it fit I should admit him into the hall?"

"St. Mary," said the Abbot, crossing himself, "an unbelieving Jew admitted into our presence!"

"A dog Jew," echoed the Templar, "to approach a defender of the Holy Sepulchre?"

"By my faith," said Wamba, "it would seem the Templars love the Jews' inheritance better than they do their company."

"Peace, my worthy guests," said Cedric; "my hospitality must not be bounded by your dislikes. If heaven endured a whole nation for centuries, we may endure the presence of one Jew for a few hours. But I constrain no man to converse or to feed with him. Let him have a table and food apart."

Introduced with little ceremony, and advancing with fear and hesitation, and many a bow of deep humility, a tall, thin old man approached the lower end of the table. His features, keen and regular, with an aquiline nose, and piercing black eyes, his high and wrinkled forehead, and long grey hair and beard, would have been considered as handsome, had they not been the marks of a race, which, during those dark ages, was alike detested by the credulous and prejudiced vulgar people, and persecuted by the greedy nobility, and who, perhaps, owing to that very hatred and persecution, had adopted a national character, in which there was much, to say the least, mean and unamiable.

The Jew's dress was a plain russet cloak of many folds, covering a dark purple tunic. He had large boots lined with fur, and a belt around his waist, which held a small knife, together with a case for writing materials, but no weapon. He wore a high, square, yellow cap of a peculiar fashion, assigned to his nation to distinguish them from Christians. This he took off with great humility at the door of the hall.

The reception of this person in the hall of Cedric the Saxon was such as might have satisfied the most prejudiced enemy of the tribes of Israel. Cedric himself coldly nodded in answer to the Jew's repeated salutations, and signed to him to take place at the lower end of the table, where, however, no one offered to make room for him.

While Isaac thus stood an outcast in the present society, looking in vain for welcome or resting-place, the pilgrim, who sat by the chimney, took compassion upon him, and resigned his seat, saying briefly ; " Old man, my garments are dried, my hunger is appeased ; thou art both wet and fasting." So saying, he gathered together, and brought to a flame, the decaying

brands which lay scattered on the ample hearth ; took from the larger table some food, placed it upon the small table at which he had himself supped, and, without waiting for the Jew's thanks, went to the other side of the hall.

After some conversation with his guests, Cedric said, "Pledge me in a cup of wine, Sir Templar, and fill another to the prior. Cupbearer ! Knave, fill the goblets.—To the strong in arms, Sir Templar, be their race or language what it will, who now bear themselves best in Palestine among the champions of the Cross !"

"It becomes not one wearing this badge to answer," said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert ; "yet to whom, besides the sworn champions of the Holy Sepulchre, can the palm be assigned among the champions of the Cross ?"

"To the Knights Hospitallers," said the prior ; "I have a brother of their order."

"I think, friend Cedric," said Wamba, interfering, "that had Richard of the Lion's Heart been wise enough to have taken a fool's advice, he might have staid at home with his merry Englishmen, and left the recovery of Jerusalem to those same Knights Templars who had most to do with the loss of it."

"Were there, then, none in the English army," said the Lady Rowena, "whose names are worthy to be mentioned with the Knights of the Temple, and of St. John ?"

"Forgive me, lady" replied De Bois-Guilbert ; "the English monarch did, indeed, bring to Palestine a host of gallant warriors, second only to those Knights of the Temple, who have always defended the Holy Land."

"Second to NONE," said the Pilgrim, who had stood near enough to hear, and had listened to this conversation with marked impatience. All turned towards the spot whence came the

unexpected interruption. "I say," repeated the pilgrim, in a firm and strong voice, "that the English knights were second to NONE who ever drew sword in defence of the Holy Land. I say, besides, for I saw it, that King Richard and five of his knights challenged all comers at a tournament ; and that on that day each challenger made three charges, and threw to the ground with his lance three antagonists. And I add that of the knights overthrown, seven were Knights of the Temple."

It is impossible to describe the bitter scowl of rage which made yet darker the Templar's swarthy face.

Cedric, in his joy, exclaimed : "I would give thee this golden bracelet, pilgrim, couldst thou tell me the names of those knights who upheld so gallantly the renown of merry England."

"That will I do gladly" replied the pilgrim, "and without reward ; my oath, for a time, prohibits me from touching gold."

"I will wear the bracelet for you, if you will, friend palmer," said Wamba.

"The first in honour as in arms, in renown as in place," said the pilgrim, "was the brave Richard, King of England."

"I forgive him," said Cedric ; "I forgive him his descent from the tyrant Duke William."

"The Earl of Leicester was the second," continued the pilgrim ; "Sir Thomas Multon of Gilsland was the third."

"Of Saxon descent, he at least," said Cedric, with exultation.

"Sir Foulk Doilly, the fourth," proceeded the pilgrim.

"Saxon also, at least by the mother's side," continued Cedric, who listened with the utmost eagerness, and forgot, in part at least, his hatred to the Normans, in the common triumph of the king of England and his islanders. "And who was the fifth?" he demanded.

"The fifth was Sir Edwin Turnham."

"Genuine Saxon!" shouted Cedric. "And the sixth?" he continued with eagerness—"who was the sixth?"

"The sixth," said the palmer, after a pause, in which he seemed to recollect himself, "was a young knight of lesser renown and lower rank, received into that honourable company, less to aid their enterprise than to make up their number—his name I have forgotten."

"Sir Palmer," said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert scornfully, "this assumed forgetfulness, after so much has been remembered, comes too late to serve your purpose. I will myself tell the name of the knight before whose lance fortune and my horse's fault occasioned my falling—it was the Knight of Ivanhoe; nor was there one of the six that, for his years, had more renown in arms. Yet this will I say, and loudly—that were he in England, and would repeat the challenge in this week's tournament, I would give him every advantage of weapons, and defeat him."

"Your challenge would soon be answered," replied the Palmer, "were your antagonist near you. If Ivanhoe ever returns from Palestine, I will be his surety that he meets you."

"A goodly security!" said the Knight Templar; "and what do you proffer as a pledge?"

"This reliquary," said the Palmer, taking a small ivory box from his bosom, "containing a portion of the True Cross, brought from the Holy Land."

The Templar without showing any reverence for the sanctity of the relic, took from his neck a gold chain, which he flung on the board, saying—"Let Prior Aymer hold my pledge and that of this nameless vagrant, in token that when the Knight of Ivanhoe comes to Britain, he underlies the challenge of Brian de Bois-Guilbert. If he does not accept it, I will proclaim him as a coward on the walls of every Temple Court in Europe."

"It will not be necessary," said the Lady Rowena, breaking silence; "my voice shall be heard, if no other in this hall is raised in behalf of the absent Ivanhoe. I affirm he will meet fairly every honourable challenge. I pledge name and fame that Ivanhoe gives this proud knight the meeting he desires."

Conflicting emotions seemed to have kept Cedric silent during this discussion. Gratified pride, resentment, embarrassment, chased each other over his broad and open brow; while his attendants, on whom the name of the sixth knight seemed to produce an effect almost electrical, hung in suspense upon their master's looks. But when Rowena spoke, the sound of her voice seemed to startle him from his silence.

"Lady," said Cedric, "this is not seemly; were further pledge necessary, I myself, offended, and justly offended, as I am, would yet pledge my honour for the honour of Ivanhoe. But the wager of battle is complete.—Is it not, Father Aymer?"

"It is," replied the prior; "and the blessed relic and rich chain I will bestow safely in the treasury of our convent, until the decision of this warlike challenge."

A final cup of wine was now served round, and the guests, after making deep obeisance to their host and to the Lady Rowena, arose and mingled in the hall, while the heads of the family, by separate doors, retired with their attendants.

CHAPTER IV.

AS the palmer, lighted by Anwold, a servant, with a torch, passed through the intricate passages of this large and irregular mansion, he was met by the waiting-maid of Rowena, who, saying in a tone of authority that her mistress desired to speak with the palmer, took the torch from the hand of the servant, and, bidding him await her return, made a sign to the palmer to follow.

A short passage, and an ascent of seven steps led him to the apartment of the Lady Rowena, the rude magnificence of which corresponded to the respect which was paid to her by the lord of the mansion. The walls were covered with embroidered hangings ; different-coloured silks, were used for curtaining the bed. Of the polished seats one, higher than the rest, had a footstool of ivory.

Four silver candelabras, holding great waxen torches, served to illuminate this apartment. Yet the walls of the apartment were so full of crevices that the rich hangings shook in the night blast, and, in spite of a sort of screen intended to protect them from the wind, the flame of the torches streamed sideways into the air. Magnificence there was ; but of comfort there was little, and, being unknown, it was unmissed.

The Lady Rowena, with three of her attendants standing at her back, arranging her hair, was seated in the sort of throne already mentioned. The Pilgrim knelt before her.

“Rise, Palmer,” said she graciously ; and after a moment’s pause, during which she seemed uncertain how to address him, “you mentioned a name—I mean,” she said, with a degree of effort, “the name of Ivanhoe, in the halls where by nature and

kindred it should have sounded most acceptably ; and yet, such is the perverse course of fate, only I dare ask you where, and in what condition, you left him ?—We heard that, having remained in Palestine, on account of his impaired health, after the departure of the English army, he had experienced the persecution of the French faction, to whom the Templars are known to be attached.”

“ I know little of the Knight of Ivanhoe,” answered the Palmer with a troubled voice. “ I would I knew him better, since you, lady, are interested in his fate. He hath, I believe, surmounted the persecution of his enemies in Palestine, and is on the eve of returning to England, where you, lady, must know better than I, what is his chance of happiness.”

The Lady Rowena sighed deeply, and asked when the Knight of Ivanhoe might be expected in England, and whether he would not be exposed to great dangers by the road. On the first point, the Palmer professed to know nothing ; on the second, he said that the voyage might be safely made by way of Venice and Genoa, and thence through France ; and Ivanhoe knew the language and customs so well that there was no danger in that part his journey.

“ Would to God,” said she, “ he were safely here now, and able to take part in the tournament at Ashby. Should Athelstane of Coningsburgh obtain the prize, Ivanhoe is likely to hear bad news when he reaches England.” She meant that, against her will, she might be betrothed to Athelstane by her guardian Cedric ; for Athelstane was, like Rowena, of the royal Saxon blood, while Ivanhoe was not, although he was noble, being the Son of Cedric.

After asking further about Ivanhoe’s health and appearance, she ordered a cup of wine to be brought for the Palmer, and, after he had drunk it, allowed him to retire.

In the ante-room he found his attendant, who, taking the torch from the hand of the waiting-maid, conducted him with more haste than ceremony to the outer part of the building, where a number of small apartments, or rather cells, served as sleeping places for the lower order of domestics, and to strangers of low rank.

"In which of these sleeps the Jew?" said the pilgrim.

"In the cell next to your holiness," was the answer.

"And where sleeps Gurth the swineheard?" said the stranger.

"Gurth," replied the servant, "sleeps in the cell on your right."

He entered the cell allotted to him, and, taking the torch from the domestic's hand, thanked him, and wished him good-night. Having shut the door and extinguished his torch, the palmer threw himself, without taking off any part of his clothes, on the rude couch, and slept, or at least lay down, till the earliest sunbeams found their way through the little grated window, which served at once to admit both air and light to his uncomfortable cell. He then started up, and, after repeating his prayers he left it, and entered that of Isaac the Jew, lifting the latch as gently as he could.

The inmate was lying in troubled slumber upon a couch similar to that on which the palmer himself had passed the night. His hands and arms moved convulsively, as if struggling with a nightmare; and besides several ejaculations in Hebrew, the following were distinctly heard in the Norman-English, or mixed language of the country: "For the sake of the God of Abraham, spare an unhappy old man! I am poor, I am penniless; even if you tortured me with hot iron, I could not give you money!"

The palmer did not wait for the end of the Jew's vision, but stirred him with his pilgrim's staff. The touch was probably associated, as is usual, with some of the fears excited by his dream ; for the old man started up, his grey hair standing almost erect upon his head ; huddling some part of his garments about him, he fixed upon the palmer his keen black eyes, expressive of wild surprise and of bodily fear.

"Fear nothing from me, Isaac," said the palmer, "I come as your friend."

"The God of Israel reward you," said the Jew, greatly relieved ; "I dreamed—but Father Abraham be praised, it was but a dream." Then collecting himself, he added in his usual tone, "And what may it be your pleasure to want at so early an hour with the poor Jew ?"

"It is to tell you," said the palmer, "that if you do not leave this mansion instantly, and travel with some haste, your journey may prove a dangerous one."

"Holy father!" said the Jew ; "whom could it interest to endanger so poor a wretch as I am ?"

"The purpose you can best guess," said the pilgrim ; "but rely on this, that when the Templar crossed the hall yesternight, he spoke to his slaves in the Saracen language, which I well understand, and ordered them this morning to watch the journey of the Jew, and to seize upon him when at a convenient distance from the mansion."

It is impossible to describe the extremity of terror which seized upon the Jew at this information, and seemed at once to overpower his whole faculties. He knelt at the foot of the palmer, like a man borne down on all sides by the pressure of some invisible force, which crushes him to the earth without the power of resistance.

“Holy God of Abraham!” was his first exclamation, folding and elevating his wrinkled hands, but without raising his grey head from the pavement; “O holy Moses! the dream was not for nought, and the vision not in vain! I feel their irons already tear my sinews! I feel the rack on my body!

“Stand up, Isaac, and listen to me,” said the palmer, who viewed the extremity of his distress with a compassion in which contempt was largely mingled; “stand up, I say, and I will point out to you the means of escape. Leave this mansion instantly, while its inmates sleep sound after the last night’s revel. I will guide you by the secret paths of the forest, known as well to me as to any forester that ranges it, and I will not leave you till you are under safe conduct.”

As the ears of Isaac received the hopes of escape which this speech intimated, he began gradually, and inch by inch, as it were, to raise himself up from the ground, until he fairly rested upon his knees, throwing back his long grey hair and beard, and fixing his keen black eyes upon the palmer’s face, with a look expressive at once of hope and fear. Then, as if suspicion had overpowered his other feelings, he suddenly exclaimed, “Young man, betray me not—for the sake of the Great Father who made us all, Jew as well as Gentile—do me no treason! I have not means to secure the good-will of a Christian beggar, were he rating it at a single penny.” As he spoke these last words, he raised himself, and grasped the palmer’s mantle with a look of the most earnest entreaty. The pilgrim freed himself, as if there were contamination in the touch.

“Wert thou loaded with all the wealth of thy tribe,” he said, “what interest have I to injure thee?—In this dress I am vowed to poverty, nor do I change it for aught save a horse and a coat of mail. Yet think not that I care for thy company, or propose

myself advantage by it ; remain here if thou wilt—Cedric the Saxon may protect thee.”

“ Alas ” said the Jew, “ he will not let me travel in his train —Saxon or Norman will be equally ashamed of the poor Israelite ; and to travel by myself through the domains of Philip de Malvoisin and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf—Good youth, I will go with you !—Let us haste—let us gird up our loins—let us flee !—Here is thy staff, why wilt thou tarry ? ”

“ I tarry not,” said the pilgrim, “ but I must secure the means of leaving this place. Follow me.”

He led the way to the adjoining cell, which was occupied by Gurth the swineherd. “ Arise, Gurth,” said the pilgrim, “ arise quickly. Undo the postern gate, and let out the Jew and me.”

Gurth was offended at the familiar and commanding tone assumed by the palmer. “ The Jew leaving Rotherwood,” said he, raising himself on his elbow, and looking suspiciously at him without rising from his bed, “ and travelling in company with the palmer as well.”

“ Nevertheless,” said Gurth, again laying down his head on the wooden log which served him for a pillow, “ both Jew and Gentile must be content to wait for the opening of the great gate—we allow no visitors to depart by stealth at these unseasonable hours.”

“ Nevertheless,” said the pilgrim, in a commanding tone, “ you will not, I think, refuse me that favour.”

So saying, he stooped over the bed of the swineherd, and whispered something in his ear in Saxon. Gurth started up as if electrified. The pilgrim, raising his finger in an attitude as if to express caution, added, “ Gurth, beware—thou art wont to be prudent. I say, undo the postern—thou shalt know more immediately.”

With hasty alacrity Gurth obeyed him, while Wamba and the Jew followed, both wondering at the sudden change in the swineherd's demeanour.

"My mule, my mule," said the Jew, as soon as they stood outside the postern door.

"Fetch him his mule," said the pilgrim; "and hearest thou,—let me have another, that I may bear him company till he is beyond these parts—I will return it safely to some of U gedric's train at Ashby. And do thou"—he whispered the rest in Gurth's ear.

"Willingly, most willingly shall it be done," said Gurth, and instantly departed to execute the commission.

"I wish I knew," said Wamba, when his comrade's back was turned, "what you palmers learn in the Holy Land."

"To say our prayers fool," answered the pilgrim, "to repent our sins, and to mortify ourselves with fasting."

"Something more potent than that," answered the jester; "for when would repentance or prayer make Gurth lend you a mule?"

At this moment Gurth appeared on the opposite side of the moat with the mules. The travellers crossed the ditch upon a drawbridge of only two planks' breadth, as narrow as the postern, and with a little wicket in the exterior palisade, which gave access to the forest. No sooner had they reached the mules, than the Jew, with hasty and trembling hands, secured behind the saddle a small bag which he took from under his cloak, containing, as he muttered, "a change of garments, only a change of garments." Then getting upon the animal with more alacrity and haste than could have been anticipated from his years, he

lost no time in so disposing the skirts of his long cloak as to conceal the bag completely from observation.

The pilgrim mounted with more deliberation, holding out, as he departed, his hand to Gurth, who kissed it with the utmost possible veneration. The swineherd stood gazing after the travellers until they were lost under the boughs of the forest path.

When the travellers had pushed on at a rapid rate through many devious paths, the palmer at length broke silence.

"That large decayed oak," he said, "marks the boundaries over which Front-de-Boeuf claims authority—we are long since far from those of Malvoisin. There is now no fear of pursuit."

"But leave me not, good pilgrim," said the Jew. "Think but of that fierce and savage Templar, with his Saracen slaves—they will regard neither territory, nor lordship."

"Our road," said the palmer. "should here separate; for it does not beseem men of my character and thine to travel together longer than needs must be. Besides, what succour couldst thou have from me, a peaceful pilgrim, against two armed heathens?"

"O good youth," answered the Jew, "thou canst defend me, and I know thou wouldest. Poor as I am, I will requite it—not with money, for money, so help me my Father Abraham, I have none—but"—

"Money and recompense," said the palmer, interrupting him, "I have already said I do not require of thee. Guide thee I can; and, it may be, even in some sort defend thee; since to protect a Jew against a Saracen can scarce be accounted unworthy of a Christian. Therefore, Jew, I will see thee safe under some fitting escort. We are now not far from the town of Sheffield,

where thou mayest easily find many of thy tribe with whom to take refuge."

"The blessing of Jacob be upon thee, good youth!" said the Jew; "in Sheffield I can stay with my kinsman Zareth, and find some means of travelling forth with safety."

"Be it so," said the palmer; "at Sheffield then we part, and half-an-hour's riding will bring us in sight of that town."

The half hour was spent in perfect silence on both parts; the pilgrim perhaps disdaining to address the Jew, except in case of absolute necessity, and Jew not presuming to force a conversation with a person whose journey to the Holy Sepulchre gave a sort of sanctity to his character. They paused on the top of a gently rising bank, and the pilgrim, pointing to the town of Sheffield, which lay beneath them, repeated the words, "Here, then, we part."

"Not till you have had the poor Jew's thanks," said Isaac; "for I do not presume to ask you to go with me to my kinsman Zareth's, who might aid me with some means of repaying your kindness."

"I have already said," answered the pilgrim, "that I desire no recompence. If, among the huge list of thy debtors, thou wilt, for my sake, spare the dungeon to some unhappy Christian who stands in thy power, I shall hold this morning's service to thee well bestowed."

"Stay, stay," said the Jew, laying hold of his garment; "something would I do more than this, something for thyself.—God knows the Jew is poor—yes, Isaac is the beggar of his tribe—but forgive me if I should guess what thou desirest most at this moment."

"If thou were to guess truly," said the palmer, "it is what thou caust not supply, wert thou as wealthy as thou sayest thou art poor."

" As I say ? " echoed the Jew ; " O, believe it, I say but the truth ; I am a plundered, indebted, distressed man. Yet I can tell thee what thou lackest, and, it may be, supply it too. Thy wish even now is for a horse and armour."

The palmer started, and turned suddenly towards the Jew :— " What fiend prompted that guess ? " said he hastily.

" No matter," said the Jew, smiling, " if it is a true one—and, as I can guess thy want, so I can supply it."

" But, consider," said the palmer, " my character, my dress, my vow."

" Last night and this morning," said the Jew, " there dropped from you words that, like sparks from flint, showed the metal within ; and in the bosom of that palmer's gown is hidden a knight's chain and spurs of gold. They could be seen as you stooped over my bed in the morning."

The pilgrim could not forbear smiling. " Were thy garments searched by as curious an eye, Isaac," said he, " what discoveries might not be made ? "

" No more of that," said the Jew, changing colour ; and drawing forth his writing materials in haste, as if to stop the conversation, he began to write upon a piece of paper. When he had finished, he gave the scroll, which was in the Hebrew character, to the pilgrim, saying, " In the town of Leicester all men know the rich Jew, Kirjath Jairam of Lombardy ; give him this scroll—he hath on sale six suits of Milan armour, the worst would suit a crowned head—ten goodly steeds, the worst might mount a king, even to do battle for his throne. Of these he will give thee thy choice, with everything else that thou needest for the tournament ; when it is over, thou wilt return them safely—unless thou shouldst have wherewith to pay

their value to the owner. Fare-thee-well! — Yet hark thee, good youth," said he, turning about, " thrust thyself not too forward into this vain hurly-burly—I speak not for endangering the steed and coat of armour, but for the sake of thine own life and limbs."

" Thanks for thy caution," said the palmer, again smiling; " I will use thy courtesy frankly, and it will go hard with me if I do not repay it."

They parted, and took different roads for the town of Sheffield.

CHAPTER V.

THE condition of the English nation was at this time extremely miserable. King Richard was absent a prisoner, and in the power of the treacherous and cruel Duke of Austria. Even the very place of his captivity was uncertain, and his fate but very imperfectly known to his subjects, who were, in the meantime, a prey to every species of oppression.

Prince John, in league with Philip of France, Cœur-de-Lion's mortal enemy, was using every species of influence with the Duke of Austria, to prolong the captivity of his brother Richard, to whom he stood indebted for so many favours. In the meantime, he was strengthening his own faction in the kingdom, of which he proposed to dispute the succession, in case of the King's death, with the legitimate heir, Arthur, Duke of Brittany, son of Geoffrey Plantagenet, the elder brother of John. This usurpation, it is well known, he afterwards effected. His own character being profligate, and perfidious, John easily attached to his person and faction, not only all who had reason to dread the resentment of Richard for their criminal proceedings during his absence, but also the numerous class of "lawless resolute," whom the crusades had turned back on their country, accomplished in vices, impoverished, and hardened in character, and who placed their hopes of harvest in civil commotion.

To these causes of public distress and apprehension, must be added, the multitude of outlaws, who driven to despair by the oppression of the feudal nobility, and the severe exercise of the forest laws, banded together in large gangs, and, keeping possession of the forests and the wastes, set at defiance the magistrates of the country. The nobles themselves, each fortified within his

own castle, and playing the petty sovereign over his own dominions, were the leaders of bands scarce less lawless and oppressive than those of the avowed robbers. To maintain these retainers, and to support the extravagance and magnificence in which they lived, the nobility borrowed sums of money from the Jews at the most usurious interest, which they often evaded repaying by terrorising their creditors.

Yet amidst all this distress the poor, as well as the rich, the vulgar as well as the noble were always delighted to see a tournament. The passage of arms, as it was called, which was to take place at Ashby, in the county of Leicester, in the presence of Prince John himself, had attracted universal attention, and an immense crowd of persons of all ranks hastened upon the appointed morning to the place of combat.

The scene was singularly romantic. On the verge of a wood, which approached to within a mile of the town of Ashby, was an extensive meadow, of the finest and most beautiful green turf, surrounded on one side by the forest, and fringed on the other by straggling oak trees, some of which had grown to an immense size. The ground, as if formed on purpose for the martial display which was intended, sloped gradually down on all sides to a level bottom, which was enclosed for the lists with strong palisades, forming a space of a quarter of a mile in length, and about half as broad. The form of the enclosure was an oblong save that the corners were considerably rounded off, in order to afford more convenience to the spectators. The openings for the entry of the combatants were at the northern and southern extremities of the lists, accessible by strong wooden gates, each wide enough to admit two horsemen riding abreast. At each of these portals were stationed two heralds, attended by six trumpeters, as many attendants and a strong body of men-at-arms for maintaining order,

and ascertaining the rank of the knights who proposed to engage in this martial game.

On a platform beyond the southern entrance, formed by a natural elevation of the ground, were pitched five magnificent pavilions, adorned with pennons of russet and black, the chosen colours of the five knights challengers. Before each pavilion was suspended the shield of the knight by whom it was occupied, and beside it stood his squire, quaintly disguised in some fantastic dress, according to the taste of his master. The central pavilion, as the place of honour, had been assigned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whose renown in all games of chivalry, had caused him to be eagerly received into the company of the challengers, and even adopted as their chief and leader, though he had so recently joined them. On one side of his tent were pitched those of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf and Philip de Malvoisin, and on the other was the pavilion of Hugh de Grantmesnil, a noble baron in the vicinity. Ralph de Vipont, a Knight of Saint John of Jerusalem, occupied the fifth pavilion. From the entrance into the lists, a gentle sloping passage, ten yards in breadth, led up to the platform on which the tents were pitched. It was strongly secured by a palisade on each side, as was the terrace in front of the pavilions, and the whole was guarded by men-at-arms.

The northern approach to the lists terminated in a similar entrance of thirty feet in breadth, at the extremity of which was a large enclosed space for such knights as might be disposed to enter the lists against the challengers. Behind this were placed tents containing refreshments of every kind for their accommodation, with armourers, farriers, and other attendants, in readiness to give their services wherever they might be necessary.

The exterior of the lists was in part occupied by temporary galleries, spread with tapestry and carpets, and accommodated with cushions for the convenience of those ladies and nobles who were

expected to attend the tournament. A narrow space, betwixt these galleries and the lists, gave accommodation for the small landowners and farmers and spectators of a higher rank than the mere common people. The promiscuous multitude arranged themselves upon large banks of turf prepared for the purpose, which, aided by the natural elevation of the ground, enabled them to overlook the galleries, and obtain a fair view into the lists. Besides these, many hundreds had perched themselves on the branches of the trees which surrounded the meadow ; and even the steeple of a country church, at some distance, was crowded with spectators.

It only remains to notice that one gallery in the very centre of the eastern side of the lists, and consequently exactly opposite to the spot where the shock of the combat was to take place, was raised higher than the others, more richly decorated, and graced by a sort of throne and canopy, on which the royal arms were emblazoned. Squires and pages, in rich liveries, waited around this place of honour, which was designed for Prince John and his attendants. Opposite to this royal gallery was another, elevated to the same height, on the western side of the lists ; and more gaily, if less sumptuously, decorated than that destined for the prince himself. A train of pages and of young maidens, gaily dressed in fancy habits of green and pink, surrounded a throne decorated in the same colours. Among pennons and flags, a blazoned inscription informed the spectators, that this seat of honour was designed for the Queen of Beauty and of Love. But who was to represent the Queen of Beauty and of Love on the present occasion no one was prepared to guess.

Meanwhile, spectators of every description thronged forward to occupy their respective stations, and not without many quarrels concerning those which they were entitled to hold. Some of these were settled by the men-at-arms with brief ceremony ; the shafts of their battle-axes and pommels of their swords being readily

employed as an argument. Others, which involved the rival claims of more elevated persons, were decided by the heralds, or by the two marshals of the field.

Gradually the galleries became filled with knights and nobles, whose long mantles were contrasted with the gayer and more splendid dresses of the ladies, who, in a greater proportion than even the men themselves, thronged to witness a sport which one would have thought too bloody and dangerous to afford their sex much pleasure. The lower and interior space was soon filled with yeomen and citizens, and such of the lesser gentry as, from modesty, poverty, or uncertain title, dared not assume any higher place. It was of course amongt these that the most frequent disputes for precedence occurred.

"Dog of an unbeliever!" said an old man, whose threadbare tunic bore witness to his poverty, as his sword, and dagger, and golden chain showed his pretensions to rank; "darest thou press upon a Christian, and a Norman gentleman?"

This rough expostulation was addressed to no other than our acquaintance Isaac, who, richly and even magnificently dressed, was endeavouring to make place in the foremost row beneath the gallery for his daughter, the beautiful Rebecca, who had joined him at Ashby, and who was now hanging on her father's arm, not a little terrified by the popular displeasure which seemed generally excited by her father's presumption. But Isaac, though we have seen him sufficiently timid on other occasions, knew well that at present he had nothing to fear. It was not in places of general resort, or where their equals were assembled, that any avaricious or malevolent noble dared to offer him injury. At such meetings the Jews were under the protection of the general law; and on the present occasion, Isaac felt more than usually confident, being aware that Prince John was even then in the very act of negotiating a large loan from the Jews of York. Isaac's own

share in this transaction was considerable, and he well knew that the prince's eager desire to bring it to a conclusion would ensure him his protection.

Emboldened by these considerations, the Jew pursued his point, and jostled the Norman Christian, without respect either to his descent, quality, or religion. The complaints of the old man, however, excited the indignation of the bystanders. One of these, a stout, well-set fellow, dressed in green, having twelve arrows stuck in his belt, with a bow six feet long in his hand, turned round, and angrily advised the Jew to remember that all the wealth he had acquired by sucking the blood of his miserable victims had but swelled him like a bloated spider, which might be overlooked while he kept in a corner, but would be crushed if it ventured into the light. This stern speech made the Jew shrink back ; and he would have probably withdrawn, had not the attention of everyone been diverted. For Prince John at the moment entered the lists attended by a numerous and gay train. Among the latter was the Prior of Jorvaux, in the richest dress which a dignitary of the Church could venture to exhibit. The rest of Prince John's retinue consisted of the favourite leaders of his mercenary troops, some marauding barons and profligate courtiers, with several Knights Templars and Knights of Saint John. The Knights of these two orders were jealous of King Richard, under whose leadership they had served unwillingly in the Crusade ; and in England therefore they attached themselves to the faction of Prince John, who was well known to be disloyal to his brother.

Prince John rode round the lists at the head of his jovial party, laughing loud with his train, and eyeing boldly the beauties who adorned the lofty galleries.

Meanwhile, his attention was attracted by the disturbance round Isaac, the Jew. He instantly recognised the Jew, but was

much more agreeably attracted by the beautiful daughter, who, terrified by the tumult, clung close to the arm of her aged father.

"Ah," he said, "there is my prince of moneylenders having to dispute with penniless dogs for the privilege of sitting amongst them. But he and his lovely Jewess shall have a place in the gallery!—What is she, Isaac?"

"My daughter Rebecca, so please your Grace," answered Isaac, with a low bow.

"Daughter or wife, she should be seated according to her beauty and thy merits. Who is sitting above there?" John continued, turning his eyes on the gallery. "Saxon churls!—let them sit close, and make room for my prince of insurers and his lovely daughter."

Those who occupied the gallery to whom this speech was addressed, were the family of Cedric the Saxon, with that of his ally and kinsman, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, a personage who, on account of his descent from the last Saxon monarchs of England, was held in the highest respect by all the Saxon natives of the north of England.

Athelstane, utterly confounded at an order which the manners and feelings of the times rendered so insulting, was unwilling to obey, yet undetermined how to resist; and, without making any motion whatever of obedience, opened his large grey eyes, and started at the prince with an astonishment which had in it something extremely ludicrous. But the impatient John regarded it in no such light.

"The Saxon pig," he said, "is either asleep or cares not.—Prick him with your lance, De Bracy," speaking to a knight who rode near him, the leader of a band of free companions, or military adventurers. There was a murmur even among the attendants of Prince John; but De Bracy, whose profession freed him from all scruples, extended his long lance over the space

which separated the gallery from the lists, and would have executed the commands of the prince before Athelstane had recovered presence of mind sufficient even to draw back from the weapon, had not Cedric, as prompt as his companion was tardy, unsheathed, with the speed of lightning, the short sword which he wore, and at a single blow severed the point of the lance from the handle. The blood rushed to the face of Prince John. He swore one of his deepest oaths, and was about to utter some threat corresponding in violence, when he was diverted from his purpose, partly by his own attendants, who begged him to be patient, partly by a general exclamation of the crowd, uttered in loud applause of the spirited conduct of Cedric. The prince rolled his eyes in indignation, and looked round for some safe and easy victim; and chancing to notice the same archer in green whom we have already mentioned persisting in his applause, he demanded his reason for clamouring thus.

“I always applaud,” said the yeoman, “when I see a good shot or a gallant blow.”

“Oh!” answered the prince; “then thou art thyself a good shot?”

“A woodsman’s mark, and at woodsman’s distance, I can hit.” answered the yeoman.

“Then he shall take part in our archery contest on the third day,” said the Prince. “See that he does not escape.”

“Meanwhile, stand up, ye Saxon churls,” continued the fiery prince; “for, by the light of heaven, since I have said it, the Jew shall have his seat amongst ye!”

When the Jew was modestly protesting that he could not presume to intrude amongst the nobility, Prince John again burst out.

“Up, infidel dog, when I command you, or I will have thy swarthy hide stripped off, and tanned.”

Thus urged, the Jew began to ascend the steep and narrow steps which led to the gallery.

"Let me see," said the prince, "who dare stop him," fixing his eye on Cedric, who looked as though it were his intention to hurl the Jew down headlong.

The catastrophe was prevented by the clown Wamba, who, springing betwixt his master and Isaac, and exclaiming in answer to the prince's defiance, "I will!" flourished his wooden sword above his head. The Jew recoiled, misssd his footing, and rolled down the steps—an excellent jest to the spectators, who set up a loud laughter, in which Prince John and his attendants heartily joined.

"Give me the prize, cousin prince," said Wamba; "I have vanquished my foe in fair fight with my sword," he added, brandishing the wooden sword.

"Who and what art thou, noble champion?" said Prince still laughing.

"A fool by right of descent," answered the jester; "I am Wamba, the son of Witless."

"Make room for the Jew in front of the lower ring," said Prince John, not unwilling perhaps to seize an excuse to desist from his original purpose; "to place the vanquished beside the victor would be wrong."

CHAPTER VI

IN the midst of his cavalcade, the prince suddenly stopped, and declared the principal business of the day had been forgotten.

"We have forgotten, Sir Prior, to name the fair Sovereign of Love and of Beauty, by whose white hand the prize is to be awarded. For my part, I am liberal in my ideas, and I give my vote for the black-eyed Rebecca."

"A Jewess!" answered the prior, turning up his eyes in horror. We should be stoned out of the lists; and I am not yet old enough to be a martyr. Besides, I swear that she is far inferior to the lovely Saxon, Rowena."

"Saxon or Jew," answered the prince, "what matters it? I say, name Rebecca, were it only to mortify the Saxon churls."

A murmur arose even among his own immediate attendants.

"This passes a jest, my lord," said De Bracy; "no knight will stay if such an insult is attempted."

"It is the mere wantonness of insult," said one of the oldest and most important of Prince John's followers, Waldemar Fitzurse, "and if your Grace attempt it, cannot but prove ruinous to your projects."

John saw the necessity of acquiescence. "I did but jest," he said; "and you turn upon me like so many adders! Name whom you will, and please yourselves."

"Nay, nay," said De Bracy; "let the fair sovereign's throne remain unoccupied until the conqueror shall be named, and then let him choose the lady by whom it shall be filled. It will add another grace to his triumph, and teach fair ladies to prize the love of valiant knights who can exalt them to such distinction."

The prince acquiesced, and, assuming his throne, gave a signal to the heralds to proclaim the laws of the tournament, which were briefly as follows :

First, the five challengers were to undertake all comers.

Secondly, any knight proposing to combat, might, if he pleased, select a special antagonist from among the challengers, by touching his shield. If he did so with the reverse of his lance, the trial of skill was made with what were called the arms of courtesy, that is, with lances at whose extremity a piece of round flat board was fixed, so that no danger was encountered, save from the shock of the horses and riders. But if the shield was touched with the sharp end of the lance, the knights were to fight with sharp weapons, as in actual battle.

Thirdly, when the knights present had accomplished their vow, by each of them having five combats, the Prince was to declare the victor in the first day's tourney, who should receive as prize a war-horse of exquisite beauty and matchless strength ; and in addition to this reward of valour, it was now declared, he should have the honour of naming the Queen of Love and Beauty, by whom the prize should be given on the ensuing day.

Fourthly, on the second day, there should be a general tournament, in which all the knights present might take part, and, being divided into two bands of equal number, might fight it out manfully, until the signal was given by Prince John to cease the combat. The elected Queen of Love and Beauty was then to crown the knight whom the Prince should adjudge to have borne himself best on this second day, with a coronet of gold cut into the shape of a laurel crown. On this second day the knightly games ceased. But on that which was to follow, feats of archery, and other popular amusements, were to be practised, for the amusement of the populace. In this manner did Prince John endeavour to lay the foundation of a popularity, which he was

perpetually throwing down by some inconsiderate act of wanton aggression upon the feelings and prejudices of the people.

The lists now presented a most splendid spectacle. The sloping galleries were crowded with all the great and wealthy in the northern and midland parts of England ; and the contrast of the various dresses of these dignified spectators rendered the view as gay as it was rich, while the interior and lower space, filled with the citizens and yeomen, formed, in their more plain attire, a dark fringe or border around this circle of brilliant embroidery, relieving, and at the same time, setting off, its splendour.

The heralds finished their proclamation and withdrew from the lists in gay and glittering procession; and none remained within them save the marshals of the field, who, armed from head to foot, sat on horseback at the opposite ends of the lists. Meanwhile, the enclosed space at the northern extremity of the lists, large as it was, was now completely crowded with knights desirous to prove their skill against the challengers, and, when viewed from the galleries, presented the appearance of a sea of waving plumage, intermixed with glistening helmets and tall lances, to the extremities of which were, in many cases, attached small pennons of about a span's breadth, which, fluttering in the air as the breeze caught them, joined with the restless motion of the feathers to add liveliness to the scene.

At length the barriers were opened and five knights chosen by lot, advanced through the lists, restraining their fiery steeds, and compelling them to move slowly, while, at the same time, they exhibited their paces, together with the grace and dexterity of the riders. As the procession entered the lists, the sound of a wild barbaric music was heard from behind the tents of the challengers, where the performers were concealed. It was of

Eastern origin, having been brought from the Holy Land ; and the mixture of the cymbals and bells seemed to bid at once welcome and defiance to the knights as they advanced. With the eyes of all the spectators fixed upon them, the five knights advanced to the platform upon which the tents of the challengers stood, and there separating, each touched slightly, and with the reverse of his lance, the shield of the antagonist to whom he wished to oppose himself. The lower orders of spectators in general—nay, many of the higher classes, and it is even said several of the ladies, were rather disappointed at the champions choosing the arms of courtesy ; for they were then interested in a tournament exactly in proportion to the danger incurred by the champions engaged.

Having intimated their more peaceful purpose, the champions retreated to the extremity of the lists, where they remained drawn up in a line ; while the challengers mounted their horses, and headed by Brian de Bois-Guilbert, descended from the platform, and opposed themselves individually to the knights who had touched their respective shields.

At the sound of clarions and trumpets, they started out against each other at full gallop ; and such was the superior dexterity or good fortune of the challengers, that those opposed to Bois-Guilbert, Malvoisin, and Frenz-de-Beauf, rolled on the ground. The antagonist of Graftmesnil, instead of bearing his lance-point fair against the crest or the shield of his enemy, swerved so much from the direct line as to break the weapon across the body of his opponent—a circumstance which was accounted more disgraceful than that of being actually unhorsed ; because the latter might happen from accident, whereas the former evinced awkwardness and want of management of the weapon and of the horse. The fifth knight alone maintained the honour of his party, and parted fairly with the Knight of Saint

John, both splintering their lances without advantage on either side.

The shouts of the multitude, together with the acclamations of the heralds, and the sounding of the trumpets, greeted the triumph of the victors and the defeat of the vanquished. The former retreated to their pavilions, and the latter, gathering themselves up as they could, withdrew from the lists in disgrace and dejection, to agree with their victors concerning the redemption of their arms and their horses, which, according to the laws of the tournament, they had forfeited. The fifth of their number alone remained in the lists long enough to be greeted by the applauses of the spectators.

A second and a third party of knights took the field ; and although they had various success, yet, upon the whole, the advantage decidedly remained with the challengers, not one of whom lost his seat or swerved from his charge—misfortunes which befell one or two of their antagonists in each encounter. The spirits, therefore of those opposed to them seemed to be considerably damped by their continued success. Three knights only appeared on the fourth entry, who, avoiding the shields of Bois-Guilbert and Front-de-Bœuf, contented themselves with touching those of the three other knights, who had not altogether shown the same strength and dexterity. This politic selection did not alter the fortune of the field. The challengers were still successful : one of their antagonists was overthrown, and both the others failed to strike the helmet and shield of their antagonists firmly and strongly, with the lance held in a direct line, so that the weapon might break unless the champion was overthrown.

After this fourth encounter there was a considerable pause ; nor did it appear that any one was very desirous of renewing the contest. The spectators murmured among themselves ; for

among the challengers, Malvoisin and Front-de-Bœuf were unpopular from their characters, and the others, except Braunesnil, were disliked as strangers and foreigners.

But none shared the general feeling of dissatisfaction so keenly as Cedric the Saxon, who saw in each advantage gained by the Norman challengers a repeated triumph over the honour of England. His own education had taught him no skill in the games of chivalry, although, with the arms of his Saxon ancestors, he had shown himself, on many occasions, a brave and determined soldier. He looked anxiously to Athelstane, who had learned the accomplishment of the age, as if desiring that he should make some personal effort to recover the victory which was passing into the hands of the Templar and his associates. But though both stout of heart and strong of person, Athelstane had a disposition too lazy and unambitious to make the exertions which Cedric seemed to expect from him.

"The day is against England, my lord," said Cedric, in a marked tone; "are you not tempted to take the lance?"

"I shall tilt to-morrow," answered Athelstane, "in the *meille*; it is not worth while for me to arm myself to-day."

Two things displeased Cedric in this speech. It contained the Norman word *meille* (to express the general conflict), and it evinced some indifference to the honour of the country; but it was spoken by Athelstane, whom he held in such profound respect, that he would not trust himself to question his reasons. Moreover, he had no time to make any remark, for Wamba thrust in his word, observing, "It was better, though not easier, to be the best man among a hundred, than the best man of two."

Athelstane took the observation as a serious complement; but Cedric, who better understood the jester's meaning, darted at him an angry and threatening look; and lucky it was

for Wamba, perhaps, that the time and place prevented his receiving more painful marks of his master's resentment.

The pause in the tournament was still uninterrupted excepting by the voices of the heralds exclaiming—"Stand forth, gallant knights, fair eyes look upon your deeds!"

The music of the challengers also breathed from time to time wild bursts expressive of triumph or defiance, while the people grudged a holiday which seemed to pass away in inactivity; and old knights and nobles lamented in whispers the decay of martial spirit, spoke of the triumphs of their younger days, but agreed that the land did not now supply ladies of such transcendent beauty as had animated the tournaments of former times. Prince John began to talk to his attendants about making ready the banquet, and the necessity of awarding the prize to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had, with a single spear, overthrown two knights, and foiled a third.

At length, the Saracenic music of the challengers was answered by a solitary trumpet, which sounded a note of defiance from the northern extremity. All eyes were turned to see the new champion whom these sounds announced, and no sooner were the barriers opened than he paced into the lists. As far as could be judged of a man sheathed in armour, the new adventurer did not greatly exceed the middle size, and seemed to be rather slender than strongly made. His suit of armour was formed of steel, richly inlaid with gold, and the device on his shield was a young oak tree pulled up by the roots, with the Spanish word *Deslichado*, signifying Disinherited. He was mounted on a gallant black horse, and as he passed through the lists he gracefully saluted the prince and the ladies by lowering his lance. The dexterity with which he managed his steed, and the youthful grace which he displayed in his manner, won him the favour of the multitude, which some of the lower classes expressed

by calling out, "Touch Ralph de Vipont's shield—touch the Hospitalier's shield; he has the least sure seat, he is your cheapest bargain."

The champion, moving onward amid these well-meant hints, ascended the platform from the lists, and, to the astonishment of all present, riding straight up to the central pavilion, struck with the sharp end of his spear the shield of Brian de Bois-Guilbert until it rung again. All stood astonished at his presumption, but none more than the redoubted knight whom he had thus defied to mortal combat, and who, little expecting so bold a challenge, was standing carelessly at the door of the pavilion.

"Have you confessed yourself brother," said the Templar, "and have you heard mass this morning, that you risk your life so boldly?"

"I am fitter to meet death than thou art," answered the Disinherited Knight; for by this name the stranger had recorded himself in the books of the tourney.

"Then take your place in the lists," said Bois-Guilbert, "and look your last upon the sun; for this night thou shalt sleep in paradise."

"Thanks for thy courtesy," replied the Disinherited Knight, "and to requite it, I advise thee to take a fresh horse and a new lance, for by my honour thou wil need both."

Having expressed himself thus confidently, he reined his horse backward down the slope which he had ascended, and compelled it in the same manner to move backward through the lists, till he reached the northern extremity, where he remained stationary, awaiting his antagonist. This feat of horsemanship again attracted the applause of the multitude.

However incensed at his adversary for the precautions which he recommended, Brian de Bois-Guilbert did not neglect this

advice ; for his honour was too nearly concerned to permit his neglecting any means which might ensure victory over his opponent. He changed his horse for a proved and fresh one of great strength and spirit. He chose a new and a tough spear, lest the wood of the former might have been strained in the previous encounters. Lastly, he laid aside his shield, which had received some little damage, and received another from his squires. His new shield bore a raven in full flight, holding in its claws a skull, and bearing the motto, *Beware of the Crow*.

When the two champions stood opposed to each other at the two extremities of the lists, the public expectation was strained to the highest pitch. Few thought that the encounter could terminate well for the Disinherited Knight, yet his courage and gallantry secured the general good wishes of the spectators.

The trumpets had no sooner given the signal, than the champions dashed from their posts with the speed of lightning, and closed in the centre of the lists with the shock of a thunderbolt. The lances burst into splinters up to the very handles, and it seemed at the moment that both knights had fallen, for the shock had made each horse recoil backwards upon its haunches. The skill of the riders recovered their steeds by use of the bridle and spur ; and having glared on each other for an instant with eyes which seemed to flash fire through the bars of their visors, each retired to the extremity of the lists, and received a fresh lance from the attendants.

A loud shout from the spectators, the waving of scarfs and handkerchiefs, and general acclamations, showed the interest taken by the spectators in this encounter, the most equal, as well as the best performed, which had graced the day. But no sooner had the knights resumed their station, than the clamour of applause was hushed into a silence, so deep and so dead, that it seemed the multitude were afraid even to breathe.

A few minutes pause having been allowed, that the combatants and their horses might recover breath, Prince John signed to the trumpeters to sound the onset. The champions a second time sprang from their stations, and closed in the centre of the lists, with the same speed, the same dexterity, the same violence, but not the same equal fortune as before.

In this second encounter, the Templar aimed at the centre of his antagonists shield, and struck it so fair and forcibly, that his spear went to splinters and the Disinherited Knight reeled in his saddle. On the other hand, that champion had, in the beginning of his career, directed the point of his lance towards Bois-Guilbert's shield, but, changing his aim almost in the moment of encounter, he addressed it to the helmet, a mark more difficult to hit, but which, if struck, rendered the shock more irresistible. Fair and true he hit the Norman on the visor, where his lance's point kept hold of the bars. Yet, even at this disadvantage, the Templar sustained his high reputation; and had not the girths of his saddle burst, he might not have been unhorsed. As it chanced, however, saddle, horse, and man rolled on the ground under a cloud of dust.

To extricate himself from the stirrups and fallen steed was to the Templar scarce the work of a moment; and, stung with madness, both at his disgrace and at the acclamations with which it was hailed by the spectators, he drew his sword, and waved it in defiance of his conqueror. The Disinherited Knight sprung from his steed, and also unsheathed his sword. The marshals of the field, however, spurred their horses between them, and reminded them that the laws of the tournament did not, or, the present occasion, permit this species of encounter.

"We shall meet again, I trust," said the Templar, casting a resentful glance at his antagonist; "and where there are none to separate us."

"If we do not," said the Disinherited Knight, "the fault will not be mine. On foot, or horseback, with spear, with axe, or with sword, I am alike ready to encounter thee."

More and augrier words would have been exchanged, but the marshals, crossing their lances betwixt them, compelled them to separate. The Disinherited Knight returned to his first station, and Bois Guilbert to his tent, where he remained for the rest of the day in great anger.

Without alighting from his horse, the conqueror called for a bowl of wine, and, opening the lower part of his helmet, announced that he drank it, "To all true English hearts, and to the confusion of foreign tyrants." He then commanded his trumpet to sound a defiance to the challengers, and desired a herald to announce to them that he would make no choice but was willing to encounter them in any order they pleased.

The gigantic Front de-Bœuf, in black armour, was the first who took the field. He bore on a white shield a black bull's head, half defaced by the numerous encounters which he had undergone, and bearing the arrogant motto, *Beware, I am here.* Over this champion the Disinherited Knight obtained a slight but decisive advantage. Both knights broke their lances fairly, but Front-de-Bœuf, who lost a stirrup in the encounter, was adjudged to have the disadvantage.

In the stranger's third encounter, with Sir Philip Malvoisin, he was equally successful ; striking that baron so forcibly on the casque or helmet, that the laces broke, and Malvoisin, only saved from falling by being unhelmeted, was declared vanquished like his companions.

In his fourth combat, with De Grantmesnil, the Disinherited Knight showed as much courtesy as he had hitherto evinced courage and dexterity. De Grantmesnil's horse, which was young and violent, reared and plunged in the course of the career so as to

disturb the rider's aim, and the stranger, declining to take the advantage which this accident afforded him, raised his lance, and, passing his antagonist without touching him, wheeled his horse and rode back again to his own end of the lists, offering his antagonist, by a herald, the chance of a second encounter. This De Grantmesnil declined, avowing himself vanquished as much by the courtesy as by the address of his opponent.

Ralph de Vipont summed up the list of the stranger's triumphs, being hurled to the ground with such force, that the blood gushed from his nose and his mouth, and he was borne senseless from the lists.

The acclamations of thousands applauded the unanimous decision of the prince and marshals, awarding that day's honours to the Disinherited Knight.

The marshals congratulated the victor, and begged that he would allow his helmet to be unhealed, or at least that he would raise his visor before they conduced him to receive the prize of the day's tourney from the hands of Prince John. The Disinherited Knight, with all knightly courtesy, declined their request, alleging that he could not at this time suffer his face to be seen, for reasons which he had assigned to the heralds when he entered the lists. The marshals were perfectly satisfied by this reply; for amidst the frequent and joyful oaths by which knights were accustomed to bind themselves in the days of chivalry, there were none more common than those by which they engaged to remain incognito for a certain space, or until some particular adventure was achieved. The marshals, therefore, pressed no farther into the mystery of the Disinherited Knight, but, announcing to Prince John the conqueror's desire to remain unknown, they requested permission to bring him before his Grace, in order that he might receive the reward of his valour.

John being already displeased with the result of the tournament, in which the challengers whom he favoured had been successively defeated by one knight, asked haughtily, "Do you know, my lords, who this gallant can be, that bears himself thus proudly?"

"I cannot guess," answered De Bracy, "nor did I think there could be in all Britain a champion that could defeat these five knights in one day's jousting. By my faith, I shall never forget the force with which he struck De Vipont."

"Your Grace," said Waldemar Fitzurse, "will do less than due honour to the victor, if you compel him to wait till we tell your highness that which we cannot know; at least I can form no guess--unless he be one of the brave knights who accompanied King Richard to Palestine, and who are now straggling homeward from the Holy Land."

"It may be the Earl of Salisbury," said De Bracy; "he is about the same height."

"Sir Thomas de Moulton, the Knight of Gilsland, rather," said Fitzurse; "Salisbury is bigger in the bones." A whisper arose among the train, but by whom first suggested could not be ascertained. "It might be the King--it might be Richard Cœur-de-Lion himself!"

"God forbid!" said Prince John, turning as pale as death, "Waldemar!—De Bracy, brave knights and gentlemen, remember your promises, and stand truly by me!"

"Have no fear," said Fitzurse. "That man is three inches shorter than your brother. King Richard could never get into that suit of armour, nor could that horse carry his great weight."

While he was yet speaking the marshals brought forward the Disinherited Knight to Prince John's throne. Still discomposed with the idea that his brother, so much injured, had suddenly

arrived in his native kingdom, even the distinctions pointed out by Fitzurse did not altogether remove the Prince's fears ; and while, with a short eulogy upon his valour, he caused to be delivered to him the war-horse assigned as the prize, he trembled, lest from the barred visor of the mailed form before him, an answer might be returned, in the deep and awful voice of Richard the Lion-hearted.

But the knight made no reply save a low bow, and then vaulted on to the back of the noble horse, which was led forward by two grooms.

The Prior of Jorvalx now reminded Prince John that the champion must choose the Queen of Beauty, who was to present the prize to the victor upon the following day.

"Sir Disinherited Knight," then said Prince John, "since that is the only name by which we can address you, it is now your duty as well as your privilege to name the lady who as the Queen of Beauty, is to preside over to-morrow's festival. Raise your lance."

The knight obeyed; and Prince John placed upon its point a coronet of green satin, having around its edge a circlet of gold. Then the knight rode slowly round the lists, and at length paused beneath the balcony in which the Lady Rowena was placed, and then, gracefully lowering the point of his lance, he deposited the coronet at her feet.

The trumpets instantly sounded, while the heralds proclaimed the Lady Rowena the Queen of Beauty and Love for the ensuing day, and King John, mounting his horse, rode forward to the gallery where Rowena was seated.

"Assume," he said, "fair lady, the mark of your sovereignty, to which none vows homage more sincerely than ourself, John of Anjou ; and if it please you to-day, with your noble sire and friends, to grace our banquet in the Castle of Ashby, we shall

learn to know the empress to whose service we devote to-morrow."

Rowena remained silent, and Cedric answered for her in his native Saxon.

"The Lady Rowena, possesses not the language in which to reply to your courtesy, or to take part in your festival. I also, and the noble Athelstane of Couingsburgh, speak only the language, and practise only the customs, of our Saxon fathers. We therefore decline with thanks Your Highness's courteous invitation to the banquet. To-morrow the Lady Rowena will take upon her the state to which she has been called by the free election of the victor Knight, confirmed by the acclamations of the people."

So saying, he lifted the coronet, and placed it upon Rowena's head, in token of her acceptance of the temporary authority assigned to her.

"What says he?" said Prince John, affecting not to understand the Saxon language, in which, however, he was well skilled. The purport of Cedric's speech was repeated to him in French. "Very well," he said; "to-morrow we will ourself conduct this mate sovereign to her seat of dignity.—You, at least, Sir Knight," he added, turning to the victor, who had remained near the gallery, "will share our banquet?"

The Knight, speaking for the first time, in a low and hurried voice, excused himself by pleading fatigue and the necessity of preparing for to-morrow's encounter.

"Very well," said Prince John haughtily; "although unused to such refusals, we will endeavour to digest our banquet as we may, though ungraced by the most successful in arms, and his elected Queen of Beauty."

So saying he prepared to leave the lists with his glittering train, and his turning his steed for that purpose was the signal for the breaking up and dispersion of the spectators.

CHAPTER VII.

THE Disinherited Knight had no sooner reached his pavilion, than squires and pages in abundance tendered their services to disarm him, to bring fresh attire, and to offer him a bath. Their zeal on this occasion was perhaps sharpened by curiosity, since every one desired to know who the knight was that had gained so many laurels, yet had refused, even at the command of Prince John, to lift his visor or to give his name. But the Disinherited Knight refused all other assistance save that of his own squire, or rather attendant -- a rough-looking man, in a cloak of dark-coloured cloth having his head and face half-buried, in a bonnet made of black fur. All others being excluded from the tent, this attendant relieved his master from the more burdensome parts of his armour, and placed food and wine before him.

The knight had scarcely finished a hasty meal, before his menial announced to him that five men, each leading a steed desired to speak with him.

The Disinherited Knight, therefore, stepped forth to the front of his tent, and found in attendance the squires of the challengers each of whom led his master's charger, loaded with the armour in which he had that day fought.

"According to the laws of chivalry," said the foremost of these men, "I, squire to the redoubted knight, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, bring you the horse and armour used by him in this day's passage of arms, leaving it with you to retain or to ransom the same, according to your pleasure; for such is the law of arms."

The other squires repeated nearly the same formula, and then stood to wait the decision of the Disinherited Knight.

"To you four, sirs," replied the knight, addressing those who had last spoken, "and to your honourable and valiant masters, I have one common reply. I should do ill to deprive them of steeds and arms which can never be used by braver cavaliers; but being, as I term myself in truth and earnest, the Disinherited, I must be thus far bound to your master, that they will, of their courtesy be pleased to ransom their steeds and armour, since that which I wear I can hardly term mine own."

"We stand commissioned, each of us," answered the squire of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, "to offer a hundred zecchins in ransom of these horses and suits of armour."

"It is sufficient," said the Disinherited Knight. "Half the sum my present necessities compel me to accept; of the remaining half, distribute one half among yourselves, sir squires, and divide the other half among the attendants."

The squires, expressed their deep sense of a courtesy and generosity not often practised, at least upon a scale so extensive. The Disinherited Knight then addressed his discourse to Baldwin, the squire of Brian de Bois-Guilbert. "From your master," said he, "I will accept neither arms nor ransom. Say to him in my name, that our strife is not ended—no, not till we have fought with swords as well as with lances—on foot as well as on horseback. To this mortal quarrel he has himself defied me, and I shall not forget the challenge."

"My master," answered Baldwin, "knows how to repay scorn with scorn, and blows with blows, as well as courtesy with courtesy. Since you disdain to accept from him any share of the ransom at which you have rated the arms of the other knights, I must leave his armour and his horse here, being well assured that he will never deign to mount the one or wear the other."

"You have spoken well, good squire," said the Disinherited Knight, "well and boldly, as it is right for him to speak who

answers for an absent master. Leave not, however, the horse and armour here. Restore them to thy master ; or, if he scorns to accept them, retain them, good friend, for thine own use. So far as they are mine, I bestow them upon you freely."

Baldwin made a deep obeisance, and retired with his companions ; and the Disinherited Knight entered the pavilion.

" Thus far, Gurth," said he, addressing his attendant, " the reputation of English chivalry hath not suffered in my hands."

" And I," said Gurth, " for a Saxon swineherd, have not ill played the squire."

" Yea, but," answered the Disinherited Knight, " thou hast ever kept me in anxiety lest they should discover thee."

" Tush !" said Gurth, " I fear discovery from none, saving my playfellow, Wamba the jester, of whom I could never discover whether he were most knave or fool."

" Take this bag of gold to Ashby," continued his master, " and find out Isaac the Jew of York, and let him pay himself, for the horse and arms with which his credit supplied me."

" I will do so," said Gurth, taking the bag under his cloak, and leaving the apartment ; " but ", he muttered to himself, " I will give only half of what he asks."

We must now change the scene to the village of Ashby, or rather to a country house in its vicinity belonging to a wealthy Jew with whom Isaac, his daughter, and reiue, had taken up their quarters.

The evening was now becoming dark, when a Jewish servant entered and informed Isaac that a man desired to speak with him. Isaac, saying hastily to his daughter, " Rebecca, veil thyself," commanded the stranger to be admitted.

The door opened and Gurth entered.

" Art thou Isaac the Jew of York ?" said Gurth in Saxon.

“ I am.” replied Isaac, “ and who art thou ?”

“ That is not to the purpose,” answered Gurth.

“ As much as my name is to thee,” replied Isaac ; “ for without knowing thee, how can I hold intercourse with thee ?”

“ Easily,” answered Gurth ; “ I, having to pay money, must know that I deliver it to the right person ; thou, who art to receive it, wilt not, I think, care very greatly by whose hands it is delivered.”

“ O,” said the Jew, “ you have come to pay money ? That alters our relation to each other. And from whom dost thou bring it ?”

“ From the Disinherited Knight,” said Gurth, “ victor in this day’s tournament. It is the price of the armour supplied to him by Kirjath Jairam of Leicester, on thy recommendation. The steed is restored to thy stable. I desire to know the amount of the sum which I am to pay for the armour.”

“ I said he was a good youth !” exclaimed Isaac, with joyful exultation. “ A cup of wine will do thee no harm,” he added, filling and handing to the swineherd a richer draught than Gurth had ever before tasted. “ And how much money,” continued Isaac, “ hast thou brought with thee ?”

“ Holy Virgin !” said Gurth, setting down the cup, “ what nectar these unbelieving dogs drink, while true Christians are fain to quaff ale as muddy and thick as the stuff we give to hogs ! What money have I brought with me ?” continued the Saxon ; “ only a small sum.”

“ Nay, but,” said Isaac, “ thy master has won goodly steeds and rich armour with the strength of his lance and of his right hand.”

“ My master has disposed of them already,” said Gurth.

“ Ah ! that was wrong,” said the Jew, “ that was the part of a fool. No Christians here could buy so many horses and

armour—no Jew except myself would give him half the value. If I should say that I would take eighty zecchins for the good steed and rich armour, which leaves me no profit, have you money to pay me ? ”

“ Barely,” said Gurth, though the sum demanded was more reasonable than he expected, “ and it will leave my master nigh penniless. Nevertheless, if such be your least offer, I must be content.”

“ Fill thyself another goblet of wine,” said the Jew. “ Ah ! eighty zecchins is too little. It leaveth no profit for interest ; and, besides, the good horse may have suffered injury in this day’s encounter.”

“ And I say,” replied Gurth, “ he is sound in wind and limb ; and you may see him now in your stable. And I say also that seventy zecchins is enough for the armour. If you will not take seventy, I will carry this bag back to my master.”

“ Nay, nay ! ” said Isaac ; “ lay down the eighty zecchins, and thou shalt see I will consider thee liberally.”

Gurth at length complied ; and, counting out eighty zecchins upon the table, the Jew gave him receipt for the horse and suit of armour. The Jew’s hand trembled for joy as he wrapped up the first seventy pieces of gold. The last ten he counted with much deliberation, pausing, and saying something as he took each piece from the table and dropped it into his purse. It seemed as if his avarice were struggling with his better nature which urged him to restore some part at least to his benefactor, or as a donation to his agent. His whole speech ran nearly thus :

“ Seventy-one—seventy-two ; thy master is a good youth—seventy-three—an excellent youth—seventy-four—that piece hath been clipped within the ring—seventy-five—and that looketh light of weight—seventy-six—when thy master wants money let

him come to Isaac of York—seventy-seven—that is, with reasonable security.” Hence he made a considerable pause, and Gurth had good hope that he would receive the last three pieces; but the enumeration proceeded,—“ Seventy-eight—thou art a good fellow—seventy-nine—and deservest something for thyself”—

Here the Jew paused again, and looked at the last zecchin, intending, doubtless, to bestow it upon Gurth. He weighed it upon the tip of his finger, and made it ring by dropping it upon the table. Isaac could not find it in his heart to part with it, so dropped it into his purse, as if in absence of mind, with the words, “ Eighty completes the tale, and I trust thy master will reward thee handsomely.”

Gurth grinned, filled himself a third goblet of wine, and left the apartment without ceremony.

Meanwhile Rebecca had left the apartment unperceived; and when Gurth had descended the stair, and, having reached the dark antechamber or hall, was puzzling about to discover the entrance, a figure in white, shown by a small silver lamp which she held in her hand, beckoned him into a side apartment. Gurth after a moment’s pause, obeyed the summons of the apparition, and followed her into the apartment which she indicated, where he found, to his joyful surprise, that his fair guide was the beautiful Jewess whom he had seen in her father’s apartment.

She asked him the particulars of his transaction with Isaac, which he detailed accurately.

“ My father did but jest with thee, good fellow,” said Rebecca; “ he owes thy master more than these arms and steed could pay, were their value tenfold. What sum didst thou pay my father?”

“ Eighty zecchins,” said Gurth.

“ In this purse,” said Rebecca, “ thou will find a hundred. Restore to thy master that which is his due, and enrich thyself

with the remainder. Haste—begone—stay not to render thanks ! and beware how you pass through this crowded town, where thou mayst easily lose both thy burden and thy life.”

A servant undid the outward door of the house, and let him out.

“ By St. Dunstan,” said Gurth, as he stumbled up the dark avenue, “ this is no Jewess, but an angel from heaven ! Ten zecchins from my brave young master—twenty from this pearl of Zion—Oh, happy day !—Such another, Gurth, will redeem thy bondage, and make thee free. And then I will take the free-man’s sword and shield, and follow my young master to the death, without hiding either my face or my name.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE adventures of Gurth were not yet concluded ; indeed, he himself became partly of that mind, when, after passing one or two straggling houses which stood in the outskirts of the village, he found himself in a deep lane, running between two banks overgrown with hazel and holly, while here and there a dwarf oak flung its arms altogether across the path.

“ The Jewess was right,” he said to himself. “ I wish I were safe at my journey’s end with all this treasure ! ”

He accordingly hastened his pace, in order to gain the open common to which the lane led. Just as he had reached the upper end of the lane, where the underwood was thickest, four men sprang upon him, even as his fears anticipated, two from each side of the road, and seized him so fast, that resistance, if at first practicable, would have been now too late.—“ Surrender your money,” said one of them ; “ we are the deliverers of the commonwealth, who ease every man of his burden.”

“ You would not ease me of mine so lightly,” muttered Gurth, “ if I had it in my power to give three strokes in its defence.”

“ We shall see that presently,” said the robber ; and speaking to his companions, he added, “ Bring along the knave. I see he would have his head broken, as well as his purse cut.”

He was compelled to follow his rough conductors into the very depth of the forest, where they stopped in an irregular open space, on which the beams of the moon fell without much interruption from boughs and leaves. Here his captors were joined by two other persons, apparently belonging to the gang. They

had shorts swords by their sides, and quarter-staves in their hands, and Gurth could now observe that all six wore masks.

“What money hast thou?” said one of the thieves.

“Thirty zecchins of my own property,” answered Gurth doggedly.

“A forfeit--a forfeit,” shouted the robbers : “a Saxon hath thirty zecchins, and returns sober from a village !”

“I hoarded it to purchase my freedom,” said Gurth ; “but if these thirty zecchins will buy my freedom from you, unloose my hands and I will pay them to you.”

“Stop,” said one who seemed to exercise some authority over the others ; “this bag which thou bearest, as I can feel through thy cloak, contains more coin than thou hast told us of.”

“It is the good knight my master’s,” answered Gurth, “of which, assuredly, I would not have spoken a word had you been satisfied with working your will upon mine own property.”

“Thou art an honest fellow,” replied the robber, “I warrant thee; and perhaps thy thirty zecchins may yet escape, if thou deal uprightly with us. Meantime give up thy bag for the time.” So saying, he took from Gurth’s breast the large leather pouch, in which the purse given him by Rebecca was enclosed, as well as the rest of the zecchins, and then continued his interrogation—“Who is thy master ?”

“The Disinherited Knight,” said Gurth.

“Whose good lance,” replied the robber, “won the prize in to-day’s tourney ? What is his name and family ?”

“It is his pleasure,” answered Gurth, “that they be concealed ; and from me, assuredly, you will learn nought of them.”

“What is thine own name ?”

“To tell that,” said Gurth, “might reveal my master’s.”

“ How comes thy master by this gold ? ”

“ By his good lance,” answered Gurth.—“ These bags contain the ransom of four good horses, and four good suits of armour.”

“ How much is there ? ” demanded the robber.

“ Two hundred zecchins.”

“ Only two hundred zecchins ! ” said the bandit ; “ your master hath dealt liberally with the vanquished, and put them to a cheap ransom. Name those who paid the gold.”

Gurth did so.

“ The armour and horse of the Templar Brian de Bois-Guibert, at what ransom were they held ? —Thou seest thou canst not deceive me.”

“ My master,” replied Gurth, “ will take nought from the Templar save his life’s blood. They are on terms of mortal defiance.”

“ Indeed ! ” repeated the robber, and paused after he had said the word. “ And what wert thou now doing at Ashby with this money ? ”

“ I went thither to pay to Isaac the Jew of York,” replied Gurth, “ the price of a suit of armour with which he fitted my master for this tournament.”

“ And how much didst thou pay to Isaac :—Methinks, to judge by weight, there are still two hundred zecchins in this pouch.”

“ I paid to Isaac,” said the Saxon, “ eighty zecchins, and he restored a hundred ? ”

“ How ! what ! ” exclaimed all the robbers at once ; “ darest thou trifle with us, that thou tellest such improbable lies ? ”

“ What I tell you,” said Gurth, “ is true. You will find the exact sum in a silken purse within the leathern pouch, and separate from the rest of the gold.”

"Strike a light instantly," said the Captain; "I will examine this said purse."

A light was procured accordingly, and the robber proceeded to examine the purse. The others crowded around him, and even two who had hold of Gurth relaxed their grasp while they stretched their necks to see the result of the search. Availing himself of their negligence, by a sudden exertion of strength and activity, Gurth shook himself free of their hold, and might have escaped could he have resolved to leave his master's property behind him. But such was no part of his intention. He wrenched a quarter-staff from one of the fellows, struck down the Captain, who was altogether unaware of his purpose, and well-nigh repossessed himself of the pouch and treasure. The thieves, however, were too nimble for him, and again secured both the bag and the trusty Gurth.

"Knave," said the Captain, getting up, "thou hast broken my head, and with other men of our sort thou wouldest fare the worse for thy insolence. But thou shalt know thy fate instantly. First let us speak of thy master; the knight's matters must go before the squire's. Stand thou still in the meantime—if thou stir again, thou shalt have a blow that will make thee quiet for thy life—Comrades!" he then said, addressing his gang, "this purse is embroidered with Hebrew characters, and I well believe the fellow's tale is true. The knight, his master, must needs pass us toll-free. He is too like ourselves for us to make booty of him."

"Like us?" answered one of the gang; "I should like to hear how that is made good."

"Why, thou fool," answered the captain, "is he not poor and disinherited as we are? Doth he not win his substance at the sword's point as we do? Hath he not beaten Front-de-Bœuf and Malvoisin, even as we would beat them if we could? Is he

not the enemy of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whom we have so much reason to fear?—And were all this otherwise, wouldest thou have us show a worse conscience than a Jew?"

"Nay, that were a shame," muttered the other fellow; "and yet this insolent peasant,—is he too to be dismissed scathless?"

"Not if *thou* canst scathe him," replied the captain.—"Here, fellow," continued he, addressing Gurth. "canst thou use the quarter-staff?"

"I think," said Gurth thou shouldst be best able to reply to that question."

"Aye, by my troth, thou gavest me a good knock," replied the captain; "do as much for this fellow, and thou shalt pass scot-free.—Take my staff, Miller," he added, "and keep thy head. Let the fellow go, and give him a staff."

The two champions, both armed with quarter-staves, stepped forward into the centre of the open space, in order to have the full benefit of the moonlight. The Miller, holding his quarter-staff by the middle, and whirling it round his head, exclaimed boastfully, "Come on, churl, if you thou darest: thou shalt feel the strength of a miller's arm!"

"If thou be'st a miller," answered Gurth undauntedly, "thou art doubly a thief, and I, as a true man, give thee defiance."

So saying, the two champions closed together, and for a few minutes they displayed great equality in strength, courage, and skill, intercepting and returning the blows of their adversary with the greatest dexterity, while, from the continued clatter of their weapons, a person at a distance might have supposed that there were at least six persons engaged on each side.

Long they fought equally, until the Miller began to lose temper at finding himself so stoutly opposed, and at hearing the laughter of his companions, who, as usual in such cases, enjoyed his vexation. This was not a state of mind favourable to the

noble game of quarter-staff in which, as in ordinary cudgel-playing, the utmost coolness is requisite; and it gave Gurth, whose temper was steady, though surly, the opportunity of acquiring a decided advantage, which he skilfully used.

The Miller pressed furiously forward, dealing blows with either end of his weapon alternately, and striving to come to half-staff distance, while Gurth defended himself against the attack, keeping his hands about a yard apart, and covering himself by rapidly shifting his weapon so as to protect his head and body. Thus did he maintain the defensive, until, observing his antagonist lose wind, he darted the staff at his face with his left hand; and as the Miller endeavoured to parry the thrust, he slid his right hand down to his left, and with the full swing of the weapon struck his opponent on the left side of the head, and felled him to the ground.

"Well done!" shouted the robbers; "fair play and Old England for ever! The Saxon hath saved both his purse and his hide, and the Miller has met his match."

"Thou mayest go thy ways, my friend," said the captain, addressing Gurth, "and I will cause two of my comrades to guide thee by the best way to thy master's pavilion, and to guard thee from night-walkers that might have less tender consciences than ours. Take heed, however," he added, sternly; "remember thou hast refused to tell thy name—ask not after ours, nor endeavour to discover who or what we are; for, if thou makest such an attempt, thou wilt come by worse fortune than has yet befallen thee."

Gurth thanked the Captain for his courtesy, and promised to attend to his recommendation. Two of the outlaws, taking up their quarter-staves, and desiring Gurth to follow close in the rear, walked roundly forward along a by-path, which traversed the thicket and the broken ground adjacent to it. On the very

verge of the thicket two men spoke to his conductors, and receiving an answer in a whisper, withdrew into the wood, and allowed them to pass unmolested. This circumstance showed both that the gang was strong in numbers, and they kept regular guards around their place of rendezvous.

When they arrived on the open heath, the thieves guided him to the top of a little eminence, whence he could see, spread beneath him in the moonlight, the palisades of the lists, the glimmering pavilions pitched at their end.

Here the thieves stopped.

"We go with you no farther," said they; "it is not safe that we should do so.—Remember the warning you have received—keep secret what has this night befallen you."

"Good night to you, kind sirs," said Gurth; "I shall remember your orders."

Thus they parted, the outlaws returning in the direction whence they had come, and Gurth proceeding to the tent of his master, to whom, notwithstanding the injunction he had received, he communicated the whole adventures of the evening.

CHAPTER IX.

THE following morning arose in unclouded splendour, and before the sun was much above the horizon, the marshals and their attendants appeared on the field, together with the heralds, for the purpose of receiving the names of the knights who intended to joust, with the party which each chose.

According to due formality, the Disinherited Knight was to be considered as leader of the one party, while Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had done second-best in the preceding day, was named leader of the other band. About fifty knights were desirous of combating upon each side.

About ten o'clock, a grand flourish of trumpets announced Prince John and his retinue. About the same time arrived Cedric the Saxon, with the Lady Rowena, unattended, however, by Athelstane. This Saxon lord had arrayed his tall and strong person in armour, in order to take his place among the combatants; and, considerably to the surprise of Cedric, had chosen to enlist himself in the party of the Templar. The Saxon, indeed, had remonstrated strongly with his friend upon the injudicious choice he had made of his party; but he had only received that sort of answer usually given by those who are obstinate in following their own course rather than strong in justifying it.

His best, if not his only reason, for adhering to the party of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Athelstane had the prudence to keep to himself. Though his apathy of disposition prevented his taking any means to recommend himself to the Lady Rowena, he was nevertheless by no means insensible to her charms, and considered his union with her as a matter already fixed beyond doubt, by the assent of Cedric and her other friends. It had, therefore,

been with smothered displeasure that the proud, though indolent, Lord of Coningsburgh beheld the victor of the preceding day select Rowena as the object of that honour which it became his privilege to confer. In order to punish him for a preference which seemed to interfere with his own suit, Athelstane, confident of his strength and great skill in arms, had determined not only to deprive the Disinherited Knight of his powerful succour, but, if an opportunity should occur, to make him feel the weight of his battle-axe.

De Bracy, and other knights attached to Prince John, in obedience to a hint from him, had joined the party of the challengers, John being desirous to secure, if possible, the victory to that side. On the other hand, many other knights, both English and Norman, natives and strangers, took part against the challengers, the more readily that the opposite band was to be led by so distinguished a champion as the Disinherited Knight had proved himself.

As soon as Prince John observed that the Queen of the day had arrived upon the field, assuming that air of courtesy which sat well upon him when he was pleased to exhibit it, he rode forward to meet her, and, alighting from his horse, assisted the Lady Rowena from her saddle, and marshalled her to the seat of honour opposite his own.

No sooner was Rowena seated, than a burst of music, half-drowned by the shouts of the multitude, greeted her new dignity. Meantime, the sun shone bright upon the polished arms of the knights of either side, who crowded the opposite extremities of the lists, and held eager conference together concerning the best mode of arranging their line of battle.

The heralds then proclaimed silence for the laws of the tourney to be read out. These were calculated in some degree to abate

the dangers of the day ; a precaution the more necessary as the conflict was to be with sharp swords and pointed lances.

The champions were therefore forbidden to thrust with the sword, and were confined to striking. A knight, it was announced, might use a mace or battle-axe at pleasure, but the dagger was a prohibited weapon. A knight unhorsed might renew the fight on foot with any other on the opposite side in the same predicament ; but mounted horsemen were in that case forbidden to assail him. When any knight could force his antagonist to the extremity of the lists, so as to touch the palisade with his person or arms, such opponent was obliged to yield, and his armour and horse were placed at the disposal of the conqueror. A knight thus overcome was not permitted to take any further share in the combat. If any combatant was struck down, and unable to recover his feet, his squire or page might enter the lists, and drag his master out of the way : but in that case the knight was adjudged vanquished, and his arms and horse declared forfeited. The combat was to cease as soon as Prince John should throw down his staff, or truncheon ; another precaution usually taken to prevent the unnecessary effusion of blood by the too long endurance of a sport so desperate. Any knight breaking the rules of the tournament, or otherwise transgressing the rules of honourable chivalry, was liable to be stripped of his arms, and, having his shield reversed, to be exposed to public derision, in punishment of his unknightly conduct. Having announced these precautions, the heralds concluded with an exhortation to each good knight to do his duty, and to merit favour from the Queen of Beauty and of Love.

This proclamation having been made, the heralds withdrew to their stations. The knights, entering at either end of the lists in long procession, arranged themselves in a double file, precisely opposite to each other, the leader of each party being in the centre

of the foremost rank,—a post which he did not occupy until each had carefully arranged the ranks of his party, and stationed every one in his place.

It was a goodly sight to behold so many gallant champions stand ready prepared for an encounter so formidable, seated on their war-saddles like so many pillars of iron, and awaiting the signal of encounter with the same ardour as their generous steeds, which, by neighing and pawing the ground, showed their impatience.

As yet the knights held their long lances upright, their bright points glancing in the sun, and the streamers with which they were decorated fluttering over the plumage of the helmets. Thus they remained while the marshals of the field surveyed their ranks with the utmost exactness, lest either party had more or fewer than the appointed number. The marshals then withdrew from the lists, and gave the signal to start. The trumpets sounded—the spears of the champions were at once lowered, spurs were dashed into the flanks of the horses, and the two foremost ranks of either party rushed upon each other at full gallop, and met in the middle of the lists with a shock, the sound of which was heard at a mile's distance. The rear rank of each party advanced at a slower pace to help the defeated, and follow up the success of the victors of their party.

The consequences were not instantly seen, for the dust raised by the trampling of so many steeds darkened the air, and it was a minute ere the anxious spectators could see the fate of the encounter. When the fight became visible, half the knights on each side were dismounted, some by the dexterity of their adversary's lance,—some by the superior weight and strength of their opponents,—some lay stretched on earth as if never more to rise,—some had already gained their feet, and were closing hand to hand with those

of their antagonists who were in the same predicament,--and several on both sides, who had received wounds by which they were disabled, were stopping their blood with their scarfs, and endeavouring to extricate themselves from the tumult. The mounted knights, whose lances had been almost all broken were now closely engaged with their swords.

The tumult was presently increased by the advance of the second rank on either side, which, acting as a reserve, now rushed on to aid their companions. The followers of Brian de Bois-Guilbert shouted—"For the Temple--for the Temple!" The opposite party shouted in answer—"Desdichado! Desdichado!"--which watchword they took from the motto upon their leader's shield.

The champions thus encountering each other with alternate success, the tide of battle seemed to flow now toward the southern, now toward the northern extremity of the lists, as the one or the other party prevailed. Meantime the clang of the blows, and the shouts of the combatants, mixed fearfully with the sound of the trumpets, and drowned the groans of those who fell and lay rolling defenceless beneath the feet of the horses. The splendid armour of the combatants was now defaced with dust and blood. The gay plumage, shorn from the crests, drifted upon the breeze like snow flakes. All that was beautiful and graceful in the martial array had disappeared, and what was now visible was only calculated to awake terror or compassion.

Yet, such is the force of habit, that not only the vulgar spectators, who are naturally attracted by sights of horror, but even the ladies of distinction, who crowded the galleries, saw the conflict with a thrilling interest and without a wish to withdraw their eyes from a sight so terrible. Here and there, indeed, a fair cheek might turn pale, or a faint scream might be heard, as a lover, a brother, or a husband, was struck from his horse. But, in general the ladies around encouraged the combatants by clapping their hands and

waving their veils and kerchiefs when any successful thrust or blow took place under their observation.

Such being the interest taken by the fair sex in this bloody game, that of the men is the more easily understood. It showed itself in loud acclamations upon every change of fortune, while all eyes were so riveted on the lists, that the spectators seemed as if they themselves had dealt and received the blows which were there so freely bestowed. And between every pause was heard the voice of the heralds, exclaiming “Fight on, brave knights! Man dies, but glory lives!—Fight on—death is better than defeat!—Fight on brave knights!—for bright eyes behold your deeds! ”

Amid the varied fortunes of the combat, the eyes of all endeavoured to discover the leaders of each band, who, mingling in the thick of the fight, encouraged their companions both by voice and example. Both displayed great feats of gallantry, nor did either Bois-Guilbert or the Disinherited Knight find in the ranks opposed to them a champion who could be termed their unquestioned match. They repeatedly endeavoured to single out each other, spurred by mutual hatred, and aware that the fall of either leader might be considered as decisive of victory. Such, however, was the crowd and confusion, that, during the earlier part of the conflict, their efforts to meet were unavailing, and they were repeatedly separated by the eagerness of their followers, each of whom was anxious to win honour, by measuring his strength against the leader of the opposite party.

But when the field became thin by the numbers on either side who had yielded or been rendered incapable of continuing the strife, the Templar and the Disinherited Knight at length met hand to hand, with all the fury that hatred and rivalry could inspire. Such was the skill of each in parrying and striking, that the spectators broke forth into a unanimous and involuntary shout expressive of their delight and admiration.

But at this moment the party of the Disinherited Knight had the worst ; the gigantic arm of Front-de-Boeuf on the one flank, and the ponderous strength of Athelstane on the other, dispersing those immediately exposed to them. Finding themselves freed from their immediate antagonists, it seems to have occurred to both these knights at the same instant to aid the Templar in his contest with his rival. Turning their horses, therefore, at the same moment, the Norman spurred against the Disinherited Knight on the one side, and the Saxon on the other. It was utterly impossible that the object of this unequal and unexpected assault could have sustained it, had he not been warned by a general cry from the spectators.

“ Beware ! beware ! Sir Disinherited ! ” was shouted so universally that the knight became aware of his danger ; and striking a full blow at the Templar, he reined back his steed in the same moment, so as to escape the charge of Athelstane and Front-de-Boeuf. These knights, therefore, being thus eluded, rushed from opposite sides betwixt the object of their attack and the Templar, almost running their horses against each other ere they could stop their career. Recovering their horses, however, and wheeling them round, the whole three pursued their united purpose of bearing to the earth the Disinherited Knight.

Nothing could have saved him, except the remarkable strength and activity of the noble horse which he had won on the preceding day.

This stood him in the better stead, as the horse of Bois-Guilbert was wounded, and those of Front-de-Boeuf and Athelstane were both tired with the weight of their gigantic masters, clad in complete armour, and with the preceding exertions of the day. The masterly horsemanship of the Disinherited Knight, and the activity of the noble animal which he mounted, enabled him for a few minutes to keep at sword’s point his three antagonists,

turning and wheeling with the agility of a hawk upon the wing, keeping his enemies as far separate as he could, and rushing now against the one, now against the other, dealing sweeping blows with his sword, without waiting to receive those which were aimed at him in return.

But although the lists rang with applause at his dexterity, it was evident that he must at last be overpowered ; and the nobles around Prince John implored him with one voice to throw down his truncheon, and save so brave a knight from the disgrace of being overcome by superior numbers.

“ Not I,” answered Prince John ; “ this same young man, who conceals his name, has already gained one prize, and may now afford to let others have their turn.” As he spoke thus, an unexpected incident changed the fortune of the day.

There was among the ranks of the Disinherited Knight a champion in black armour, mounted on a black horse, large of size, tall, and to all appearance powerful and strong, like the rider by whom he was mounted. This knight, who bore on his shield no device of any kind, had hitherto showed very little interest in the fight, beating off with seeming ease those combatants who attacked him, but neither pursuing his advantages, nor himself assailing any one. In short, he had hitherto acted the part rather of a spectator than of a party in the tournament, a circumstance which procured him among the spectators the name of the Black Sluggard.

At once this knight seemed to throw aside his apathy when he discovered the leader of his party so hard pressed ; for, setting spurs to his horse, which was quite fresh, he came to his assistance like a thunderbolt, exclaiming in a voice like a trumpet-call, “ *Desdichado*, to the rescue !” It was high time ; for, while the Disinherited Knight was pressing upon the Templar, Front-de-Boeuf had got near to him with his uplifted sword ; but, before

the blow could descend, the Black Knight dealt a stroke on his head, which, glancing from the polished helmet, lighted with violence scarcely abated on the head of his steed, and Front-de-Bœuf rolled on the ground, both horse and man equally stunned by the fury of the blow. He then turned his horse upon Athelstane of Coningsburgh ; and his own sword having been broken in his encounter with Front-de-Bœuf, he wrenched from the hand of the bulky Saxon the battle-axe which he wielded, and, like one familiar with the use of the weapon, bestowed him such a blow upon the crest, that Athelstane also lay senseless on the field. Having achieved this double feat, for which he was the more highly applauded that it was totally unexpected from him, the knight seemed to resume the sluggishness of his character, returning calmly to the northern extremity of the lists, leaving his leader to cope as he best could with Brain de Bois-Guilbert. This was no longer matter of so much difficulty as formerly. The Templar's horse had bled much, and gave away under the shock of the Disinherited Knight's charge. Brain de Bois-Guilbert rolled on the field, encumbered with the stirrup, from which he was unable to draw his foot. His antagonist sprang from his horse waved his sword over the head of his adversary, and commanded him to yield. Then Prince John, more moved by the Templar's dangerous situation than he had been by that of his rival, saved him the mortification of confessing himself vanquished by casting down his truncheon and putting an end to the conflict.

It was, indeed, only the embers of the fight which continued to burn : for of the few knights who still remained in the lists, the greater part had, by tacit consent, forborne the conflict for some time, leaving it to be determined by the strife of the leaders.

The squires, who had found it a matter of danger and difficulty to attend their masters during the engagement, now thronged

into the lists to attend to the wounded, who were removed with the utmost care to the neighbouring pavilions, or to the quarters prepared for them in the adjoining village.

Thus ended the memorable tournament of Ashby de la Zouche, one of the most gallantly contested of that age ; for although only four knights had died upon the field, yet upwards of thirty were desperately wounded, four or five of whom never recovered.

It being now the duty of Prince John to name the knight who had done best, he determined that the honour of the day remained with the Black Knight. It was pointed out to the prince that the victory had been in fact won by the Disinherited Knight, who, in the course of the day, had overcome six champions with his own hand, and who had finally unhorsed and struck down the leader of the opposite party. But Prince John adhered to his own opinion, on the ground that the Disinherited Knight and his party would have lost the day but for the powerful assistance of the Knight of the Black Armour, to whom, therefore, he persisted in awarding the prize.

To the surprise of all present, however, the knight thus preferred was nowhere to be found. He had left the lists immediately when the conflict ceased, and had been observed by some spectators to move down one of the forest glades with the same slow pace and listless and indifferent manner which had procured him the epithet of the Black Sluggard. After he had been summoned twice by sound of trumpet and proclamation of the heralds, it became necessary to name another to receive the honours which had been assigned to him. Prince John had now no further excuse for resisting the claim of the Disinherited Knight, whom, therefore, he named the champion of the day.

Through a field slippery with blood, and encumbered with broken armour and the bodies of slain and wounded horses, the

marshals of the lists again conducted the victor to the foot of Prince John's throne.

"Disinherited Knight," said the Prince John, "since by that title only you will consent to be known to us, we a second time award to you the honours of this tournament, and announce to you your right to claim and receive from the hands of the Queen of Love and Beauty the chaplet of honour which your valour has justly deserved." The knight bowed low and gracefully, but returned no answer.

While the trumpets sounded, while ladies waved their silken kerchiefs and embroidered veils, and while all ranks joined in a shout of exultation, the marshals conducted the Disinherited Knight across the lists to the foot of that throne of honour which was occupied by the Lady Rowena.

On the lower step of this throne the champion was made to kneel down. Indeed his whole action since the fight had ended, seemed rather to have been upon the impulse of those around him than from his own free will; and it was observed that he tottered as they guided him the second time across the lists. Rowena, descending from her station with a graceful and dignified step, was about to place the chaplet which she held in her hand upon the helmet of the champion, when the marshals exclaimed with one voice, "It must not be thus-- his head must be bare." The knight muttered faintly a few words, which were lost in the hollow of his helmet, but their purport seemed to be a desire that his casque might not be removed.

Whether from love of form or from curiosity, the marshals paid no attention to his expressions of reluctance, but unhelmed him by cutting the laces of his casque. When the helmet was removed, the well-formed yet sunburnt features of a young man of twenty-five were seen, amidst a profusion of short fair hair.

His countenance was as pale as death, and marked in one or two places with streaks of blood.

Rowena had no sooner beheld him than she uttered a faint shriek, but at once summoning up the energy of her disposition, and compelling herself, as it were, to proceed, while her frame yet trembled with the violence of sudden emotion, she placed upon the drooping head of the victor the splendid chaplet which was the reward of the day, and pronounced, in a clear and distinct tone, these words : “ I bestow on thee this chaplet, Sir Knight, as the meed of valour assigned to this day’s victor.” Here she paused a moment, and then firmly added, “ And upon brows more worthy could a wreath of chivalry never be placed ! ”

The knight stooped his head, and kissed the hand of the lovely Sovereign by whom his valour had been rewarded ; and then sank prostrate at her feet.

There was a general consternation. Cedric, who had been struck mute by the sudden appearance of his banished son, now rushed forward, as if to separate him from Rowena. But this had been already accomplished by the marshals of the field, who guessing the cause of Ivanhoe’s swoon, has hastened to undo his armour, and found that the head of a lance had penetrated his breastplate, and inflicted a wound in his side.

CHAPTER X.

THE name of Ivanhoe was no sooner pronounced than it flew from mouth to mouth with wonderful swiftness. It was not long ere it reached the circle of the prince, whose brow darkened as he heard the news. Looking around him, however, with an air of scorn, “ My lords,” he said, “ I felt the presence of my brother’s favourite follower even when I least guessed whom yonder suit of armour enclosed.”

“ Front-de-Bœuf must prepare to restore his fief of Ivanhoe,” said De Bracy.

“ Ay,” answered Fitzurse, “ this gallant is likely to reclaim the castle and manor which Richard assigned to him, and which your Highness’s generosity has since given to Front-de-Bœuf.”

“ Front-de-Bœuf,” replied John, “ is a man more willing to swallow three manors such as Ivanhoe, than to disgorge one of them. For the rest, sirs, I hope none here will deny my right to confer the fiefs of the crown upon the faithful followers who are around me.”

Prince John had proceeded thus far, and was about to give the signal for retiring from the lists, when a letter was put into his hand.

“ From where ? ” said Prince John, looking at the person by whom it was delivered.

“ From foreign parts, my lord, but exactly from where I know not,” replied his attendant. “ A Frenchman brought it hither, who said he had ridden night and day to put it into the hands of your Highness.”

The prince looked narrowly at the seal, then opened the letter with apparent agitation, which visibly and greatly increased when he had perused the contents, which were—

“Take heed to yourself, for the Devil is unchained!”

The prince turned as pale as death, like a man who has received news that a sentence of execution has been passed upon him. Recovering from the first effects of his surprise, he took Fitzurse and De Bracy aside, and put the letter into their hands. “It means,” he added, in a faltering voice, “that my brother Richard has obtained his freedom.”

“This may be a false alarm, or a forged letter,” said De Bracy.

“It is the king of France’s own hand and seal,” replied Prince John.

“It is time, then,” said Fitzurse, “to draw our party to a head either at York, or some other central place. A few days later, and it will be indeed too late. Your Highness must break short the sports.”

“The yeomen and commons,” said De Bracy, “must not be dismissed discontented, for lack of their share in the sports.”

“The day,” said Waldemar, “is not yet very far spent—let the archers shoot a few rounds at the target, and the prize be adjudged. This will be an abundant fulfilment of the prince’s promises, so far as this herd of Saxons is concerned.”

“I thank thee, Waldemar,” said the prince; “thou reminst me, too, that I have a debt to pay to that insolent peasant who yesterday insulted me. Our banquet also shall go forward to-night as we proposed. Were this my last hour of power, it should be an hour sacred to revenge and to pleasure—let new cares come with to-morrow’s new day.”

The sound of the trumpets soon recalled those spectators who had already begun to leave the field; and proclamation was made

that Prince John, suddenly called by high and peremptory public duties, held himself obliged to discontinue the entertainments of to-morrow's festival: that, nevertheless, unwilling that so many good yeomen should depart without a trial of skill, he was pleased to appoint them, before leaving the ground, presently to hold the competition of archery intended for the morrow. To the best archer a prize was to be awarded, being a bugle-horn, mounted with silver, and a silken belt richly ornamented.

More than thirty yeomen at first presented themselves as competitors; but when they understood with whom they were to be matched, upwards of twenty withdrew themselves from the contest, unwilling to encounter the dishonour of almost certain defeat.

The diminished list of competitors still amounted to eight. Prince John stepped from his royal seat to view more nearly these chosen yeomen. Having satisfied his curiosity by this investigation, he looked for the object of his resentment, whom he observed standing on the same spot, and with the same composed countenance which he had exhibited upon the preceding day.

"Fellow," said Prince John, "I guessed by the insolence thou wert no true lover of the long bow, and I see thou darest not adventure thy skill among such men as stand yonder."

"Under favour, sir," replied the yeomen, "I have another reason for refraining to shoot."

"And what is thy other reason?" said Prince John, who for some cause which perhaps he could not himself have explained felt a painful curiosity respecting this individual.

"Because," replied the woodman, "I know not if these yeomen and I are used to shoot at the same marks; and because moreover, I know not how your Grace might like the winning of a third prize by one who has unwittingly fallen under your displeasure."

Prince John coloured as he put the question, “What is thy name, yeomen.

“Locksley,” answered the yeoman.

“Then, Locksley,” said Prince John, “thou shalt shoot in thy turn, when these yeomen have displayed their skill. If thou winnest the prize, I will add to it twenty nobles; but if thou losest it, thou shalt be stripped and scourged out of the list with bowstrings, for a wordy and insolent braggart.”

“This is no fair chance you put on me, proud prince,” said the yeoman, “to compel me to compete against the best archers of Leicester and Staffordshire, under the penalty of infamy if they should beat me. Nevertheless, I will obey your pleasure.”

“Look to him close, men-at-arms,” said Prince John, “his heart is sinking; he may attempt to escape the trial.”

A target was placed at the upper end of the southern avenue which led to the lists. One by one the archers, stepping forward, delivered their shafts. Of twenty-four arrows, shot in succession, ten were fixed in the target, and the others ranged so near it, that, considering the distance of the mark, it was accounted good archery. Of the ten shafts which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the service of Malvoisin, who was accordingly pronounced victorious.

“Now, Locksley,” said Prince John to the bold yeoman, with a bitter smile, “wilt thou try conclusions with Hubert?”

“I am content to try my fortune,” said Locksley, “on condition that when I have shot two shafts at that target, he shall be bound to shoot one at that which I shall propose.”

“That is but fair,” answered Prince John, “and it shall not be refused thee.—If thou dost beat this braggart, Hubert, I will fill the bugle with silver pennies for thee.”

"A man can do but his best," answered Hubert; "but my grandsire drew a good long-bow at the battle of Hastings, and I trust not to dishonour his memory."

The former target was now removed, and a fresh one of the same size placed in its room. Hubert, who, as victor in the first trial of skill, had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great deliberation, long measuring the distance with his eye, while he held in his hand his bended bow, with the arrow placed on the string. At length he made a step forward, and, raising the bow at the full stretch of his left arm, till the centre or grasping place was nigh level with his face, he drew his bowstring to his ear. The arrow whistled through the air, and lighted within the inner ring of the target, but not exactly in the centre.

"You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert," said his antagonist, bending his bow, "or that would have been a better shot."

So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stepped to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance as if he had not even looked at the mark. He was speaking almost at the instant that the shaft left the bowstring, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer than that of Hubert to the white spot which marked the centre.

"By the light of heaven!" said Prince John to Hubert, "if that knave overcomes thee, thou art worthy of the gallows!"

Hubert had but one set speech for all occasions. "If your Highness were to hang me," he said, "a man can but do his best. Nevertheless, my grandsire drew a good bow." —

"The foul fiend on thy grandsire!" interrupted John; "shoot, knave, and shoot thy best, or it shall be worse for thee!"

Thus exhorted, Hubert resumed his place, and, not neglecting the caution which he had received from his adversary, he

made the necessary allowance for a light wind, which had just arisen, and shot so successfully that his arrow alighted in the very centre of the target.

“Thou canst not better that shot, Locksley,” said the Prince, with an insulting smile.

“I will notch his shaft for him, however,” replied Locksley.

And letting fly his arrow with a little more precaution than before, it lighted right upon that of his competitor, which it split to shivers. The people who stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamour. “This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood,” whispered the yeomen to each other; “such archery was never seen in Britain.”

“And now,” said Locksley, “I will crave your Grace’s permission to plant such a mark as is used in the North Country.”

He then turned to leave the lists. “Let your guards attend me,” he said, “if you please—I go but to cut a rod from the next willow-bush.”

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape; but the cry of “Shame!” which burst from the multitude, induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley, returned almost instantly with a willow wand about six feet in length, perfectly straight, and rather thicker than a man’s thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing, at the same time, that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used, was to put shame upon his skill. “A child,” he said, “might hit yonder target with a headless shaft; but,” added he, walking deliberately to

the other end of the lists, and sticking the willow wand upright in the ground, “ he that hits that rod at five-score yards, I call him an archer, fit to bear both bow and quiver before a king, even the stout King Richard himself.”

“ My grandsire,” said Hubert, “ drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings, and never shot at such a mark in his life—and neither will I. If this yeoman can cleave that rod, I give him the prize—or rather I yield to the devil that is in him and not to any human skill ; a man can but do his best, and I will not shoot where I am sure to miss.”

“ Cowardly dog ! ” said Prince John.—“ Locksley, do thou shoot ; but if thou hittest such a mark, I will say thou art the first man ever did so.”

“ I will do my best, as Hubert says,” answered Locksley ; “ no man can do more.”

So saying, he again bent his bow, but on the present occasion looked with attention to his weapon, and changed the string, which he thought was no longer truly round, having been a little frayed by the two former shots. He then took his aim with some deliberation, and the multitude awaited the result in breathless silence. The archer shot, and his arrow split the willow rod against which it was aimed. A burst of applause followed and even Prince John, in admiration of Locksley’s skill, lost for an instant his dislike, “ These twenty nobles,” he said, “ which, with the bugle, thou hast fairly won, are thine own ; we will make them fifty, if thou wilt take livery and service with us as a yeoman of our body-guard, and be near to our person.”

“ Pardon me, noble Prince,” said Locksley ; “ but I have vowed that if ever I take service, it should be with your royal brother, King Richard. These twenty nobles I leave to Hubert, who has this day drawn as brave a bow as his grandsire did at

Hastings. Had his modesty not refused the trial, he would have hit the wand as well as I."

Hubert shook his head as he received with reluctance the bounty of the stranger ; and Locksley, anxious to escape further observation, mixed with the crowd, and was seen no more.

CHAPTER XI.

IN the evening Prince John gave a great feast in the castle of Ashby ; and seeking at present to dazzle men's eyes by his hospitality and magnificence, he had given orders for great preparations, in order to render the banquet as splendid as possible.

Guests were invited in great numbers ; and in the necessity in which he then found himself of courting popularity, Prince John had extended his invitation to a few distinguished Saxon families, as well as to the Norman nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood. However despised and degraded on ordinary occasions, the great numbers of the Anglo-Saxons must necessarily render them formidable in the civil commotions which seemed approaching, and it was an obvious point of policy to secure popularity with their leaders.

It was accordingly the Prince's intention, which he for some time maintained, to treat these unwonted guests with a courtesy to which they had been little accustomed. But it was his misfortune that his folly and petulance were perpetually breaking out and undoing all that had been gained by his previous dissimulation.

It is necessary to keep these inconsistencies of John's character in view, that the reader may understand his conduct during the present evening. For by his wanton and stupid insults he again succeeded in making more bitter enemies of the very men he had intended to conciliate.

The Prince received Ceiric and Athelstane with great courtesy when they arrived with other guests, and expressed sincere regret for the absence of the Lady Rowena. But even the roughest of the Normans were more refined in their manners and ways of

eating than the Saxon nobles; and the latter were therefore exposed to much impolite ridicule during the feast.

At the end of the feast wine was again passed round, while they talked of Ivanhoe and his wounds, and wondered who the Black Knight might be. Then Prince John rose, cup in hand, to drink a toast.

"We drink this beaker," said he, "to the health of Wilfred of Ivanhoe, champion of this Passage of Arns, and grieve that his wound renders him absent from our feast—Let us all drink to him, and especially Cedric of Rotherwood, the worthy father of a son so promising."

"No, my lord," replied Cedric, standing up, and placing on the table his untasted cup, "I allow not the name of son to him, for he disobeys my commands, and relinquishes the manners and customs of his fathers."

"'Tis impossible," cried Prince John, with well-feigned astonishment, "that so gallant a knight should be an unworthy or disobedient son!"

"Yet my lord," answered Cedric, "so it is. He left my homely dwelling to mingle with the gay nobility of your brother's court, where he learned to do those tricks of horsemanship which you prize so highly. He left it contrary to my wish and command."

"Alas!" replied Prince John, with a deep sigh of affected sympathy, "since your son was a follower of my unhappy brother, it need not be enquired from whom he learned the lesson of filial disobedience."

Thus spake Prince John, wilfully forgetting, that of all the sons of Henry the Second, though no one was free from the charge, he himself had been most distinguished for rebellion and ingratitude to his father.

“I think,” said he, after a moment’s pause, “that my brother proposed to confer upon his favourite the rich manor of Ivanhoe.”

“He did endow him with it,” answered Cedric, “nor is it my least quarrel with my son, that he stooped to hold, as a feudal vassal, the very domains which his fathers possessed in free and independent right.

“You are not sorry then,” said the Prince, “that I have conferred the fief upon Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf?”

“I trust, Sir Reginald,” he continued, “that you will keep the fief so securely that Sir Wilfred will not incur his father’s displeasure by holding it again.”

“You can call me a Saxon,” replied the Baron, “if he or any other Englishman can take it away from me.”

“Whoever shall call thee Saxon, Sir Baron,” replied Cedric, offended at this contempt of the English, “will do thee an honour as great as it is undeserved.”

Front de-Bœuf would have replied, but Prince John’s petulance and levity got the start.

“Assuredly,” said he, “my lords, the noble Cedric speaks truth; and his race may claim precedence over us as much in the ability to gorge and get drunk as in the refinement of their manners.”

“And in the courage” added de Bois-Guilbert, “by which they distinguished themselves against our Duke William at Hastings.”

Cedric, justly incensed by these insulting remarks, replied in a voice half choked with passion, “Whatever have been the shortcomings and vices of our race, they do not include insults to guests at our own table; and our defeat at Hastings need not be mentioned by one who has just been twice unhorsed by a Saxon.”

At the instance of the politic Waldemar Fitzurse, John rose, and after expressing a hope that these jests would not be taken as insults, drank to the health of Cedric the Saxon. He then asked the latter if there were not some Norman whom he considered worthy of a toast.

The Saxon, filling his cup to the brim, addressed Prince John in these words :—“Your Highness has asked that I should name a Norman deserving to be remembered at our banquet. This is a hard task, since it calls on the conquered to sing the praises of the conquerors. Yet I will name a Norman—the first in arms and in place—the best and noblest of his race. And the lips that shall refuse to pledge his well-earned fame, I term false and dis-honoured, and will so maintain them with my life.—I drink to the health of Richard the Lion-hearted.”

Prince John, who had expected that his own name would have closed the Saxon’s speech, started when that of his brother was so unexpectedly introduced. He mechanically raised the wine-cup to his lips, and instantly set it down—an example which was imitated by his courtiers. But there were many who, with a more generous feeling, exclaimed, “Long live King Richard ! and may he be speedily restored to us ! ”

Having enjoyed his triumph for about a minute, Cedric said to his companion, “Up, noble Athelstane ! we have remained here long enough, since we have requited the hospitable courtesy of Prince John’s banquet. Those who wish to know further of our rude Saxon manners must henceforth seek us, since we have seen enough of royal banquets, and enough of Norman courtesy.”

So saying, he arose and left the banqueting-room, followed by Athelstane, and by several other guests who held themselves insulted by the sarcasms of Prince John and his courtiers.

Late at night De Bracy, disguised in the green dress of a Saxon forester was seen by Fitzurse about to leave the Castle

of Ashby. On being questioned he confided to the latter that he had a plan for carrying off the Lady Rowena, whom John had promised him as bride in return for his help against the now absent king.

“To-night the Saxon party sleeps at the monastery of St. Withold at Burton. The next day our party disguised as outlaws, will attack them as they pass through the land of Front-de-Boeuf. Then I shall appear in my own armour as a knight, rescue the fair lady, and take her to Front de-Boeuf’s castle for shelter. If she does not then consent to marry me out of gratitude she shall remain until she changes her mind. Thus her rich lands will become mine.”

He admitted that the Templar was helping him (for his own band of men was at York), and had indeed hatched the plot.

“By my halidome,” said Fitzurse, “the plan was worthy of your united wisdom! and thy prudence, De Bracy, is most especially manifested in the project of leaving the lady in the hands of thy worthy confederate. Thou mayst, I think, succeed in taking her from her Saxon friends, but how thou wilt rescue her afterwards from the clutches of Bois-Guilbert seems considerably more doubtful—He is well accustomed to hold his prey fast.”

“He is a Templar,” said De Bracy, “and cannot therefore rival me in my plan of wedding this heiress for they are not allowed to marry. Besides,” he continued, “he has another design of his own:—to capture Isaac the Jew and his daughter, to keep the latter for himself, and extort money from the former.”

CHAPTER XII

THE reader cannot have forgotten that the result of the tournament was decided by the exertions of an unknown knight in black armour, whom the spectators had called “The Black Sluggard.” This knight had left the field abruptly when the victory was achieved ; and when he was called upon to receive the reward of his valour, he was nowhere to be found. In the meantime, while summoned by heralds and by trumpets, the knight was holding his course northward, avoiding all frequented paths, and taking the shortest road through the woodlands.

Yet his purpose was baffled by the devious paths through which he rode, so that when evening closed upon him, he only found himself on the frontiers of the West Riding of Yorkshire. By this time both horse and man required refreshment, and it became necessary, moreover, to look out for some place in which they might spend the night, which was now fast approaching.

After having in vain endeavoured to select the most beaten path, in hopes it might lead to the cottage of some herdsman or forester, and having repeatedly found himself totally unable to determine on a choice, the knight resolved to trust to the sagacity of his horse. The path which the animal adopted rather turned off from the course pursued by the knight during the day ; but, as the horse seemed confident in his choice, the rider abandoned his discretion.

He was justified by the result ; for the footpath soon after appeared a little wider and more worn, and the tinkle of a small bell gave the knight to understand that he was in the vicinity of some chapel or hermitage.

Accordingly, he soon reached an open place on the opposite side of which a rock, rising abruptly from a gently sloping plain, offered its grey and weather beaten front to the traveller. At the bottom of the rock, and leaning against it, was constructed a rude hut, built chiefly of the trunks of trees felled in the neighbouring forest, and secured against the weather by having its crevices stuffed with moss mingled with clay. At a little distance on the right hand, water trickled out of the rock, and was received in a hollow stone.

Beside this fountain were the ruins of a very small chapel, of which the roof had partly fallen in. Within hung the green and weather-beaten bell, the feeble sounds of which had been some time before heard by the Black Knight.

The knight leaped from his horse, and knocked at the door of the hermitage with the butt of his lance.

It was some time before he obtained any answer, and the reply, when made, was unpropitious.

“Pass on, whosoever thou art,” was the answer given by a deep, hoarse voice from within the hut, “and disturb not the servant of God and Saint Dunstan in his evening devotions.”

“Worthy father,” answered the knight, “here is a poor wanderer bewildered in these woods, who gives thee the opportunity of exercising thy charity and hospitality.”

“And I pray you, good Christian brother,” replied the hermit, “to disturb me no more.”

“The road—the road!” shouted the knight, “give me directions for the road, if I am to expect no more from thee.”

“The road,” replied the hermit, “is easy to hit. The path from the wood leads to a morass, and from thence to a ford, which, as the rains have abated, may now be passable. When thou hast crossed the ford, thou wilt take care of thy footing up the left bank, as it is somewhat precipitous; and the path which hangs,

over the river, has lately, as I learn (for I seldom leave the duties of my chapel), given way in sundry places. Thou wilt then keep straightforward."——

"A broken path—a precipice—a ford, and a morass!" said the knight, interrupting him.—"Sir Hermit, if you were the holiest that ever lived you shall not prevail on me to go on by this road to-night. Either open the door quickly, or I will beat it down for myself."

At this moment a distant noise of barking and growling, which the traveller had for some time heard, became extremely loud and furious, and made the knight suppose that the hermit had called the dogs in his defence. Incensed at this preparation on the hermit's part, the knight struck the door so furiously with his foot, that the posts shook with his violence.

The hermit not caring again to expose his door to a similar shock, now called out aloud, "Patiuce, patience—spare thy strength, good traveller, and I will presently undo the door."

The door accordingly was opened; and the hermit, a large, strong-built man, in his sackcloth gown and hood girt with a rope of rushes, stood before the knight. He had in one hand a lighted torch, and in the other a cudgel, so thick and heavy, that it might well be termed a club. Two large shaggy dogs, half greyhound, half mastiff, stood ready to rush upon the traveller as soon as the door should be opened. But when the torch glanced upon the lofty crest and golden spurs of the knight, who stood without, the hermit, changing his tone to a sort of churlish courtesy, invited the knight to enter his hut, making excuse for his unwillingness to open his lodge after sunset, by alleging the multitude of robbers and outlaws who were abroad.

Having said this, he fixed his torch in a twisted branch of iron which served for a candlestick, placed a stool upon one side of the able, and beckoned to the knight to do the same upon the other.

They sat down, and gazed with great gravity at each other, each thinking in his heart that he had seldom seen a stronger or more athletic figure than was placed opposite to him.

"Reverend hermit," said the knight, after looking long and fixedly at his host. "were it not to interrupt your devout meditations, I would pray to know: first, where I am to put my horse?—secondly, what I can have for supper?—thirdly, where I am to have my bed for the night?"

The hermit pointed successively to two corners of the hut. "Your stable," said he, "is there—your bed there; and," reaching down a platter with two handfuls of parched pease upon it from the neighbouring shelf, and placing it upon the table, he added, "your supper is here."

The knight shrugged his shoulders, and, leaving the hut, brought in his horse, unsaddled him with much attention, and spread upon the steed's weary back his own mantle.

The hermit was apparently somewhat moved to compassion by the anxiety which the stranger displayed in tending his horse; for he dragged out of a recess a bundle of forage, which he spread before the knight's charger, and immediately afterwards shook down a quantity of dried fern in the corner which he had assigned for the rider's couch. The knight returned him thanks for his courtesy; and, this duty done, both resumed their seats by the table, whereon stood the trencher of pease placed between them. The hermit, after a long grace, set an example to his guest, by modestly putting into a very large mouth some three or four dried pease.

The knight, in order to follow so laudable an example, laid aside his helmet and the greater part of his armour, and showed to the hermit a head thick-curled with yellow hair, high features, blue eyes, remarkably bright and sparkling, a mouth well formed,

with moustaches darker than his hair, and bearing altogether the look of a bold, daring, and enterprising man, with which his strong form well corresponded.

The hermit, as if wishing to answer to the confidence of his guest, threw back his cowl, and showed a round bullet head belonging to a man in the prime of life; a close shaven crown, surrounded by a circle of curled black hair; and features which showed nothing of monastic austerity. This incongruity did not escape the guest. After he had with great difficulty eaten a mouthful of the dried pease, he found it absolutely necessary to request his pious entertainer to furnish him with some liquor. The hermit replied to his request by placing before him a large can of water from the fountain.

"It seems to me, reverend father," said the knight, "that the small morsels which you eat, together with this thin beverage, have thriven with you marvellously. You appear a man more fit to win a wrestling match, or a bout at quarter-staff, than to linger out your time in this desolate wilderness, saying masses, and living upon parched pease and cold water."

"Sir Knight," answered the hermit, "your thoughts, like those of the ignorant laity, are according to the flesh. It has pleased Our Lady and my patron saint to bless the pittance to which I restrain myself."

"Holy father," said the knight, "permit a sinful layman to crave thy name?"

"Thou mayest call me," answered the hermit, "the Clerk of Copmanhurst.—And now, valiant knight, may I pray ye for the name of my honourable guest?"

"Truly," said the knight, "Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst, men call me in these parts the Black Knight,—many, sir, add to it the epithet of Sluggard."

The hermit could scarcely forbear from smiling at his guest's reply.

"I see, Sir Sluggish Knight, that thou art a man of prudence, and, moreover, I see that my poor monastic fare pleases thee not and now I remember, Sir Sluggard, that when the charitable keeper of the forest left these dogs for my protection, he left me also some food, which, being unfit for my use, the very recollection of it had escaped me, amid my holy meditations."

"I dare swear he did so," said the knight; "I was convinced that there was better food in the cell, Holy Clerk, since you first doffed your cowl. Let us see the keeper's bounty, therefore, without delay."

The hermit cast a wistful look upon the knight, in which there was a sort of comic expression of hesitation, as if uncertain how far he should act prudently in trusting his guest.

However, he went to the farther side of the hut, and out of the recesses of a dark cupboard brought a large pasty, baked in a great pewter platter. This mighty dish he placed before his guest, who using his poniard to cut it open, lost no time in attacking its contents.

The hermit looked very sad while gazing on the diminution of the pasty, on which his guest was making desperate inroads.

"I have been in Palestine, Sir Clerk," said the knight, stopping short "and it is the custom there that every host who entertains a guest shall assure him of the wholesomeness of his food, by partaking of it along with him. I should be very glad if you would comply with this Eastern custom."

"I will for once depart from my rule, Sir Knight," replied the hermit. And, as there were no forks in those days, he at once set to work upon the pasty with his hands.

The ice of ceremony being once broken, it seemed a matter of rivalry between the guest and the entertainer which should display the best appetite ; and although the former had probably fasted longest, yet the hermit fairly surpassed him.

“ Holy Clerk,” said the knight, when his hunger was appeased, “ I would gage my good horse yonder against a gold piece that that same honest keeper to whom we are obliged for the venison, has left thee some wine by way of ally to this noble pasty.”

The hermit replied by a grin ; and, returning to the cupboard, he produced a leathern bottle, which might contain about four quarts. He also brought forth two large drinking cups, made of horn. Filling both cups, and saying, in the Saxon fashion, “ *Waes hael, Sir Sluggish Knight !* ” he emptied his own at a draught.

“ *Drinc hael, Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst !* ” answered the warrior, and emptied his.

“ By my faith,” said the knight, “ thou makest me more curious than ever ! Thou art the most mysterious hermit I ever met ; and I will know more of thee ere we part. I am sure that one who appreciates good food as thou dost, will find sport and plenty amongst the deer of the king’s forest. One will never be missed that finds its way to such a holy man ! ”

“ Sir Knight”, was the reply, “ I would have you remember that I am a true hermit. Besides, if I were to kill the king’s deer I should be in danger of hanging, but for my holy character.”

“ Yet,” continued the knight, “ hast thou never let fly an arrow into the herd on a moonlight night when the foresters are warm in bed ? ”

“ This inquisitiveness on the part of one who has by force extorted a night’s entertainment requires forcibly checking,” replied the sturdy hermit in mock severity. The knight, entering

into the spirit of the jest, said he would give the friar his choice of weapons.

"Then," said the friar, "what sayest thou, good friend, to these weapons."

Thus speaking, he opened another cupboard, and took out from it a couple of broadswords and shields such as were used by the yeomanry of the period. The knight, who watched his motions, observed that this second place of concealment was furnished with two or three good longbows, and half-a-dozen sheaves of arrows. A harp was also visible.

"I promise thee, Hermit," said he, "I will ask thee no more offensive questions. The contents of that cupboard are an answer to all my inquiries; and I see a weapon there" (here he stooped and took out the harp, "on which I would more gladly prove my skill with thee, than at the sword."

"I hope, Sir Knight," said the hermit, "thou hast given no good reason for thy surname of the Sluggard. Nevertheless, thou art my guest, and I will not put thy manhood to the proof without thine own free will. Sit thee down, then, and fill thy cup; let us drink, sing, and be merry."

First the knight sang a song, then the Hermit; and so they continued. Fast and furious grew their mirth and many a song was exchanged betwixt them, when their revels were interrupted by a loud knocking at the door of the hermitage.

The occasion of this interruption we can only explain by resuming the adventures of another set of our characters.

CHAPTER XIII

WHEN Cedric the Saxon saw his son drop down senseless in the lists at Ashby, his first impulse was to order him into the custody and care of his own attendants, but the words choked in his throat. He could not bring himself to acknowledge, in the presence of such an assembly, the son whom he had renounced, and disinherited. He ordered his steward, Oswald, however, to keep an eye upon him, and to convey Ivanhoe to Ashby as soon as the crowd had dispersed. Oswald, however, was too late. The crowd dispersed, indeed, but the knight was nowhere to be seen by that time.

It was in vain that Oswald looked around for his young master—he saw the bloody spot on which he had lately sunk down, but himself he saw no longer. Suddenly he recognised the features of his fellow-servant Gurth. Anxious concerning his master's fate, and in despair at his sudden disappearance, the swineherd was searching for him everywhere, and had neglected, in doing so, the concealment on which his own safety depended. Oswald deemed it his duty to secure Gurth, whom he considered as a deserter from the service of Cedric.

Renewing his inquiries concerning the fate of Ivanhoe, the only information which he could collect from the bystanders was, that the knight had been raised with care by certain well-attired grooms, and placed in a litter belonging to a lady among the spectators, which had immediately carried him out of the crowd. Oswald, on receiving this intelligence, resolved to return to his master for further instructions, taking Gurth along with him.

Cedric had been very anxious concerning his son ; but no sooner was he informed that Ivanhoe was in careful, and probably in friendly, hands, than the paternal anxiety which had been excited by doubts as to his fate, gave way anew to the feeling of injured pride and resentment, at what he termed Wilfred's filial disobedience. " Let him go," said he, " let those attend his wounds for whose sake he gained them. He is fitter to do the juggling tricks of the Norman chivalry than to maintain the fame and honour of his English ancestry with the good old weapons of his country."

" If to maintain the honour of ancestry," said Rowena, who spoke up boldly for her forbidden lover, " it is sufficient to be wise in council and brave in battle—to be boldest among the bold, and noblest among the noble, I know no voice save his father's which would not give him praise."

" Be silent, Lady Rowena ! " burst out the Saxon, " I will not listen even to you, if you praise this disobedient son, whose presumptuous love you encourage. Please prepare yourself for the Prince's feast at Ashby."

" I will go to no feast," replied Rowena, " while Ivanhoe lies wounded, perhaps even dying. Only a hard-hearted father will do that."

Cedric's anger against his son was still hot, as we have seen, even after he had eaten and drunk well at the banquet, and was partly the cause of the insults which he received there.

Immediately after returning from the castle the party of Saxons set off on their homeward journey, and remained for the night at the monastery of St. Withold, as they had arranged.

Proceeding on their way the next morning, the travellers soon reached the wooded country, which was held dangerous at that time from the number of outlaws whom oppression and poverty

had driven to despair. From these rovers, however, Cedric and Athelstane accounted themselves secure, as they had in attendance ten servants, besides Wamba and Gurth, whose aid could not be counted upon, the one being a jester and the other a captive.

As the travellers journeyed on their way, they were alarmed by repeated cries for assistance; and when they rode up to the place whence the cries came, they were surprised to find a litter or palanquin placed upon the ground, beside which sat a young woman, richly dressed in the Jewish fashion, while an old man, whose yellow cap proclaimed him to belong to the same nation, walked up and down with gestures of the deepest despair, and wrung his hands, as if affected by some strange disaster.

When he began to come to himself out of this agony of terror, Issac of York (for it was our old friend) was at length able to explain that he had hired a body-guard of six men at Ashby, together with the mules for carrying the litter of a sick friend. The party had undertaken to escort him as far as Doncaster. They had come thus far in safety, but, having received information from a woodcutter that there was a strong band of outlaws lying in wait in the woods before them, Isaac's escort had not only taken flight, but had carried off with them the horses which bore the litter, and left the Jew and his daughter, without the means either of defence or of retreat, to be plundered, and probably murdered, by the bandits, whom they expected every moment. "Would it please your honours," added Isaac, in a tone of deep humiliation, "to permit the poor Jews to travel under your protection?"

"Dog of a Jew!" said Athelstane, who had a petty mind, "ask neither aid nor company from us; and if they rob only such as thee, who rob all the world, I, for mine own share, shall hold them honest folk."

Cedric did not assent to this. "We shall do better," said he, "to leave them two of our attendants and two horses to convey them back to the next village. It will diminish our strength but little; and with your good sword, noble Athelstane, and the aid of those who remain, it will be light work for us to face twenty of those outlaws."

Rowena, somewhat alarmed by the mention of outlaws in force, and so near them, strongly seconded the proposal of her guardian. But Rebecca, suddenly quitting her dejected posture, and making her way through the attendants to the palfrey of the Saxon lady, knelt down, and kissed the hem of Rowena's garment. Then rising and throwing back her veil, she implored her that she would have compassion upon them, and suffer them to go forward under their protection. "It is not for myself that I pray this favour," said Rebecca; "nor is it even for that poor old man. But it is in the name of one dear to many, and dear even to you, that I beseech you to let this sick person be transported with care."

The noble and solemn air with which Rebecca made this appeal gave it double weight with the fair Saxon.

"The man is old and feeble," she said to her guardian, "the maiden young and beautiful, their friend sick and in peril of his life. Let them unload two of the sumpter-mules, and put the baggage behind two of the serfs. The mules may transport the litter, and we have led horses for the old man and his daughter."

Cedric readily assented to what she proposed, and the change of baggage was hastily achieved; for the single word "outlaws" rendered every one alert. Amid the bustle Gurth was taken from horseback, and while this was being done he prevailed upon the jester to slacken the cord with which his arms were bound. It was so negligently refastened, perhaps intentionally, on the part

of Wamba, that Gurth found no difficulty in freeing his arms altogether and then, gliding into the thicket, he made his escape. As everyone was thinking of the outlaws, and no one in particular was set to watch over Gurth, it was some time before he was missed.

The path upon which the party travelled was now so narrow, as not to admit above two riders abreast, and began to descend into a dingle, along which ran a brook, whose banks were overgrown with dwarf willows. Advancing without much order, they had just crossed the brook with a part of their followers, when they were assailed in front, flank, and rear at once, with an impetuosity to which, in their confused and ill-prepared condition, it was impossible to offer effectual resistance.

Both the Saxon chiefs were made prisoners. Cedric, the instant that an enemy appeared, launched at him his javelin, which nailed the man against an oak-tree that happened to be close behind him. Thus far successful, Cedric spurred his horse against a second, drawing his sword at the same time, and striking with such force that his weapon encountered a thick branch which hung over him, and he was disarmed by the violence of his own blow. He was instantly made prisoner, and pulled from his horse. Athelstane was forcibly dismounted, long before he could draw his weapon, and the attendants, surprised and terrified at the fate of their masters, fell an easy prey to the assailants; while the Lady Rowena and the Jew and his daughter experienced the same misfortune.

Of all the train none escaped except Wamba, who showed upon the occasion much more courage than those who pretended to greater sense. He seized a sword belonging to one of the domestics, who was just drawing it with an irresolute hand, laid it about him like a lion, drove back several who approached him, and made a brave though ineffectual attempt to help his master.

Finding himself over-powered, the Jester at length threw himself from his horse, plunged into the thicket, and, favoured by the general confusion, escaped from the scene of action.

Yet the valiant Jester, as soon as he found himself safe, hesitated more than once whether he should not turn back and share the captivity of a master to whom he was sincerely attached.

“I have heard men talk of the blessing of freedom,” he said to himself, “but I wish any wise man would teach me what use to make of it now that I have it.”

As he pronounced these words aloud, a voice very near him called out in a low and cautious tone, “Wamba!” and Gurth the swineherd immediately stood before him.

“What is the matter?” asked Gurth; “what is the meaning of these cries, and that clashing of swords?”

“My lord, and my lady, and Athelstane, are all prisoners.”

“How came they to be prisoners?” said Gurth. “Can we not help them?”

As Wamba was about to reply, a third person suddenly made his appearance, and commanded them both to halt. From his dress and arms, Wamba would have guessed him to be one of those outlaws who had just assailed his master; but he wore no mask, the rich bugle-horn which he wore, as well as the calm and commanding expression of his voice and manner, made him recognise Locksley, the man who had been victorious in the contest for the prize of archery.

“What is the meaning of all this?” said he. “Who are those that rob and make prisoners in the forest?”

“You may see them over there,” said Wamba; “their dress is very like your own.”

“I will go and look,” said Locksley, “meanwhile stay where you are till I return. But I must make myself as like these men as possible.”

So saying, he unbuckled his bugle, took a feather from his cap, and gave them to Wamba ; then put on a mask drew which he drew from his pouch, and went to reconnoitre.

The yeoman returned in the course of a few minutes. "Friend Gurth," he said, "I have mingled among those men, and have learned to whom they belong, and whither they are bound. You are both servants, and, as I think, faithful servants, of Cedric the Saxon, the friend of the rights of Englishmen. He shall have English hands to help him in this extremity. Come then with me, until I gather more aid."

So saying, he walked through the wood at a great pace, followed by the jester and the swineherd, and, after three hours' good walking, arrived at a small opening in the forest, in the centre of which grew an oak tree of enormous magnitude, throwing its twisted branches in every direction. Beneath this tree four or five yeomen lay stretched on the ground, while another, as sentinel, walked to and fro in the moonlight shade.

Upon hearing the sound of feet approaching, the sentinel instantly gave the alarm, and the sleepers as suddenly started up and bent their bows ; but, when they recognised the guide, he was welcomed with every token of respect and attachment.

"Disperse and seek your companions," said Locksley. "Collect what force you can, for there's game afoot that must be hunted hard, and will turn to bay. Meet me here by daybreak. And stay," he added, "I have forgotten what is most necessary of all. Two of you take the road quickly towards Torquilstone, the castle of Front-de-Boeuf. A set of gallants, who have been masquerading in disguise like our own, are carrying a band of prisoners thither. —Watch them closely, for, even if they reach the castle before we collect our force, our honour is concerned to punish them, and we will find means to do so."

They departed on their different errands ; and their leader and his two companions pursued their way to the chapel of Copmanhurst.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN they had reached the hermitage, they heard the friar and his guest singing an old drinking song. At length the inmates were disturbed by Locksley's loud and repeated knocks. "By my beads!" said the hermit, stopping short, "here come more benighted guests. I would not that they found us engaged thus. Get thy helmet on thy head, friend Sluggard, as quickly as thy nature will permit, while I remove these flagons; and to drown the clatter, strike into the tune which thou hear'st me sing; it is no matter for the words—I scarcely know them myself."

So saying, he struck up a Latin hymn in a loud voice, under cover of which he removed the drinking horns: while the knight, laughing heartily, and arming himself all the while, assisted his host with his voice from time to time as his mirth permitted.

"What folly are you engaged on at this hour?" said a voice from without.

"Go on your way," said the hermit, "and disturb not the devotions of me and my holy brother."

"Mad priest," answered the voice from without, "open to Locksley!"

"All's safe—all's right," said the hermit to his companion. "He is a friend!"

"But what friend?" answered the knight.

"What friend?" replied the hermit. "What friend?—why, he is the very same honest keeper I told thee of a while since."

"Ay, as honest a keeper as thou art a pious hermit," replied the knight; "I doubt it not. But undo the door before he beats it from its hinges."

The hermit speedily unbolted the door, and admitted Locksley, with his two companions.

"Why, hermit," was the yeoman's first question, as soon as he beheld the knight, "what companion hast thou here?"

"A brother of our order," replied the friar, shaking his head; "we have been at our prayers all night."

"Well," answered Locksley; "thou must in any case, leave thy praying and take up the quarter-staff; we shall need every one of our merry men, whether priest or layman." Locksley then led the knight a little apart and addressed him thus:—"Deny it not, Sir Knight—you are he who decided the victory to the advantage of the English against the Normans on the second day of the tournament at Ashby."

"And what follows, if you guess truly, good man?" replied the knight.

"I should in that case say that you are always a friend to the weaker party."

"Such is the duty of a true knight at least," replied the Black Knight; "and I hope there will not be reason to think otherwise of me."

"But for my purpose," said the yeoman, "thou shouldst be a good Englishman as well as a good knight."

"You can speak to no one," replied the knight, "to whom England, and the life of every Englishman, can be dearer than to me."

"I willingly believe so," said the woodsman, "for never had this country such need to be supported by those who love her. Hear me, and I will tell thee of my enterprise, in which thou mayest take an honourable part. A band of villains in disguise have seized a noble Englishman, called Cedric the Saxon, together with his ward, and his friend, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and

have carried them off to a castle in this forest, called Torquilstone. Wilt thou aid in their rescue ? ”

“ I am bound by my vow to do so,” replied the knight ; “ but who are you, who request my assistance in their behalf ? ”

“ I am,” said the forester, “ a nameless man ; but I am the friend of my country, and of my country’s friends.—With this account of me you must for the present remain satisfied. Believe, however, that my word, when pledged, is as inviolate as if I wore golden spurs.”

“ I willingly believe it,” said the knight ; “ and will, therefore, ask thee no further questions, but aid thee in setting at freedom those oppressed captives.”

In the meantime, the friar had changed his garments and was now completely accoutréed as a yeoman, with sword and shield, bow and quiver, and a battle-axe over his shoulder.

“ Come on,” said Locksley ; “ we must collect our forces if we are to storm the castle of Reginald Front-de-Boeuf.”

Meanwhile Cedric and his party were being hurried by their captors towards Front-de-Boeuf’s castle of Torquilstone ; and the following conversation was taking place between de Bracy and the Templar, Bois-Guilbert.

“ It is time now for you to leave us, Sir Maurice,” said the Templar to de Bracy, “ in order to play your part of gallant rescuer, after changing your disguise.”

“ I have thought better of it,” said De Bracy ; “ I will not leave thee till the prize is safe in Front-de-Boeuf’s castle. There I will appear before the Lady Rowena in my own shape, and trust that she will excuse my violence because of the fierceness of my love.”

“ What has made you change your plan ? You do not suspect me of wanting to run away with your prize, the fair Rowena ? ”

“ I will not give you the opportunity,” replied de Bracy.

"I care not for your blue-eyed beauty," said the Templar. "There is in that train one who will make me a better mate."

"Thou meanest the fair Jewess!" said de Bracy.

"And if I do," said Bois-Guilbert, "who shall gainsay me?"

"No one that I know," said de Bracy, "unless it be your vow of celibacy, or a check of conscience for an intrigue with a Jewess."

"For my vow," said the Templar, "our Grand Master hath granted me a dispensation. And for my conscience, a man that has slain three hundred enemies of our faith need not reckon up every little failing."

"Thou knowest best thine own privileges," said de Bracy. "Yet, I would have sworn thy thoughts were more on the old usurer's money-bags, than on the black eyes of the daughter."

"I can admire both," answered the Templar; "besides, the old Jew is but half-prize. I must share his gold with Front-de-Bœuf, who will not lend us the use of his castle for nothing."

Whilst this dialogue was proceeding, they had approached Torquilstone, the castle of Front-de-Bœuf. It was a fortress of no great size, consisting of a large and high square tower, surrounded by smaller buildings which were in an inner court-yard surrounded by a wall. Around the exterior wall was a most deep moat or ditch, supplied with water from a neighbouring rivulet. Front-de-Bœuf, whose character placed him often at feud with his enemies, had made considerable additions to the strength of his castle, by building towers upon the outward wall. The approach, as usual in castles of the period, lay through an arched barbican, or out-work, which was terminated and defended by a small turret at each corner.

De Bracy blew his horn three times, and the archers and crossbowmen, who had manned the wall upon seeing their approach, hastened to lower the drawbridge and admit them. The prisoners were compelled by their guards to alight, and were conducted to an apartment where a hasty repast was offered them.

The captives had not long enjoyed their refreshment, before they were taken away to different parts of the castle. Cedric and Athelstane were put into an inner room opening into the guard-room, Rowena and Rebecca were put into separate rooms. The old Jew entreated and offered money that his daughter might be allowed to remain with him. “Dog of a Jew!” answered one of his guards, “when thou hast seen thy prison, thou wilt not wish thy daughter to share it.”

CHAPTER XV.

THE poor Jew was then taken away and thrust into a dungeon vault of the castle, the floor of which was beneath the level of the ground, and very damp, being lower than even the moat itself. The only light came through one or two loop-holes far above the reach of the captive's hand. These apertures admitted, even at mid-day, only a dim light, which was changed for utter darkness long before night. Chains and shackles, which had been used for former captives, hung rusted and empty on the walls of the prison. At one end of this ghastly dungeon was a large fire-grate, over the top of which were stretched some rusty transverse iron bars.

The whole appearance of the dungeon might have appalled a stouter heart than that of Isaac.

The Jew sat in a corner of his dungeon for sometime. Then steps were heard, the bolts screamed as they were withdrawn, the rusty hinges creaked as the door opened, and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, followed by two Saracen slaves of the Templar, entered the prison.

He paused within three steps of the corner in which the unfortunate Jew was crouching and made a sign for one of the slaves to approach. The slave came forward accordingly, and, producing from his basket a large pair of scales and several weights, he laid them at the feet of Front-de-Bœuf, and retired to a respectful distance.

"Accursed dog of an accursed race," said the Norman, "in these scales thou shalt weigh me out a thousand pounds."

The Jew started to protest that he was old and feeble, and poor, and that he and his friends between them had no such sum of

money ; but he was roughly cut short by the Baron, who bade him consider well what fate was upon him.

“ This dungeon is no place for trifling. Prisoners a thousand times more distinguished than thou have died within these walls, and their fate hath never been known ! But for thee is reserved a long and lingering death, to which theirs was luxury.”

He again made a signal for the slaves, who produced from their baskets a quantity of charcoal, a pair of bellows, and a flask of oil. While the one struck a light with a flint and steel, the other disposed the charcoal in the large rusty-grate, and blew the bellows until the fuel came to a red glow.

“ Seest thou, Isaac,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “ the iron bars above the glowing charcoal ?—on that warm couch thou shalt lie, stripped of thy clothes. One of these slaves shall maintain the fire beneath thee, other shall anoint thy wretched limbs the while with oil. Now, choose betwixt such a scorching bed and the payment of a thousand pounds of silver ; for, by the head of my father, thou hast no other option.”

“ I cannot make the choice,” said Isaac, “ because I have not the means of satisfying your exorbitant demand ! ”

“ Seize him and strip him, slaves,” said the knight.

The assistants once more stepped forward, laid hands on the unfortunate Isaac, lifted him up from the ground, and, holding him between them, awaited the hard-hearted baron’s further signal. The unhappy Jew looked at the glowing furnace over which he was presently to be stretched, and seeing no chance of his tormentors relenting, his resolution gave way.

“ I will pay,” he said, “ the thousand pounds of silver—that is,” he added, after a moment’s pause, “ I will pay it with the help of my brethren. When and where must it be delivered ? ”

"Here," replied Front-de-Bœuf, "here it must be delivered—weighed out on this very dungeon floor.—Thinkest thou I will part with thee until thy ransom is secure?"

"And what is to be my surety," said the Jew, "that I shall be at liberty after this ransom is paid?"

"The word of a Norman noble, thou dog" answered Front-de-Bœuf.

"I crave pardon, noble lord," said Isaac timidly, "but wherefore should I rely wholly on the word of one who will trust nothing to mine?"

"Because thou canst not help it, Jew," said the knight sternly.
"When shall I have the money?"

"Let my daughter Rebecca go forth to York," answered Isaac, "with your safe-conduct, and so soon as man and horse can return, the treasure"—here he groaned deeply, but added, after the pause of a few seconds,—"the treasure shall be counted out on this very floor."

"Thy daughter!" said Front-de-Bœuf, as if surprised,—"By heavens, I wish I had known of this. I gave her to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert."

"Robber and villain!" said the Jew, with passion, which he now found it impossible to bridle, "I will pay thee nothing—not one silver penny will I pay thee, unless my daughter is delivered to me in safety and honour!"

"Art thou in thy senses?" said the Norman sternly—"has thy flesh and blood a charm against heated iron and scalding oil?"

"I care not!" said the Jew, rendered desperate by paternal affection; "do thy worst. My daughter is my flesh and blood, dearer to me a thousand times than those limbs which thy cruelty threatens. No silver will I give thee; no, not a silver penny will

I give thee. Take my life if thou wilt, and say, that the Jew, amidst his tortures, knew how to defy the Christian."

"We shall see that," said Front-de-Bœuf. "Strip him, slaves, and chain him down upon the bars."

In spite of the feeble struggles of the old man, the Saracens had already torn from him his upper garment, and were proceeding totally to disrobe him, when the sound of a bugle, twice sounded outside the castle, penetrated even to the recesses of the dungeon, and immediately after loud voices were heard calling for Sir Reginald Front-de Bœuf. Unwilling to be found engaged in this hellish occupation, the savage baron gave the slaves a signal to restore Isaac's garment, and left the dungeon with his attendants.

CHAPTER XVI.

MEANWHILE the Lady Rowena had been removed to an apartment of the castle which had been judged most fitting for the accommodation of the Saxon heiress ; and here she was left to meditate upon her fate, until Front-de-Bœuf, de Bracy, and the Templar had determined the fate of their unhappy prisoners.

It was about the hour of noon when de Bracy, for whose advantage the expedition had been first planned, appeared before the Lady Rowena.

He saluted Rowena by taking off his cap, and he gently motioned the lady to a seat. But Rowena declined, and replied, " If I am in the presence of my jailor, Sir Knight, his prisoner will remain standing till she learns her doom."

" Alas ! fair Rowena," returned de Bracy, " you are in presence of your captive, not of your jailor. Your beauty has made me your slave."

" I know you not, Sir," said the lady, drawing herself up with pride. " And no Knight ought thus to intrude himself upon the presence of an unprotected lady."

" That I am unknown to you," said de Bracy, " is indeed my misfortune ; yet let me hope that de Bracy's name has not been always unspoken, when minstrels or heralds have praised brave and noble deeds whether in the lists or in the battlefield."

" To minstrels and heralds, then, leave thy praises, Sir Knight," replied Rowena ; " and let them praise thy last brave and noble deed, thy attack on an old man and thy capture of an unfortunate lady, travelling through a forest by night."

“ You are unjust, Lady Rowena,” said the Knight ; “ can you allow no excuse for the madness that your own beauty had caused ? ”

When Rowena had again replied with bitter scorn, the Norman burst out in anger, “ I tell thee, thou shalt not leave this castle save as my wife. I am not used to resistance, and a Norman noble does not need to beg humbly as a favour the hand of a Saxon maiden. Thou art proud, Rowena,” said de Bracy, “ and thou art therefore the fitter to be my wife. By what other means couldst thou be raised to high rank saving by marriage with me ? How else wouldest thou escape from the mean country dwelling where Saxons herd with the swine which form their wealth, to take thy seat amid the nobles of the land ? ”

“ Sir Knight,” replied Rowena, “ the humble dwelling which you scorn hath been my shelter from infancy ; and when I leave it it shall be with one who does not despise the home and customs in which I have been brought up.”

“ I guess your meaning, lady,” said de Bracy. “ But do not imagine that Richard Cœur-de-Lion will ever resume his throne, far less that Wilfred of Ivanhoe, his favourite, will ever lead thee to court as his bride. Know, lady, that this rival is in my power, and that it rests with me to betray the secret of his being within the castle.”

“ Wilfred here ! ” said Rowena, in disdain ; “ that is not true.”

De Bracy looked at her steadily for an instant. “ Wert thou really ignorant of this ? ” said he ; didst thou not know that Wilfred of Ivanhoe travelled in the litter of the Jew ? — a suitable conveyance for the crusader, whose doughty arm was to conquer the Holy Sepulchre ! ” And he laughed scornfully.

" And if he is here," said Rowena, compelling herself to a tone of indifference, though trembling with anxiety, " what has he to fear from Front-de-Bœuf ? "

" Knowest thou not that our host, Front-de-Bœuf, will gladly remove from his path anyone who opposes his claim to the fair barony of Ivanhoe ? If you agree to marry me, the wounded champion shall have nothing to fear from Front-de-Bœuf ; otherwise I will leave him in the hands of one who has never shown compassion."

" Save him, for the love of Heaven ! " said Rowena, her firmness giving way to her anxiety for her lover.

" I can—I will—it is my purpose," said de Bracy ; " for when Rowena consents to be the bride of de Bracy, who is it shall dare to put forth a violent hand upon her kinsman—the son of her guardian—the companion of her youth ? But otherwise Wilfred dies, and thou thyself art not the nearer to freedom. Front-de-Bœuf has to give only one blow of a dagger to silence his opposition for ever."

" Cedric's fate also depends upon thy decision " added de Bracy ; " and I leave thee to form it."

Hitherto, Rowena had sustained her part in this trying scene with undismayed courage ; but it was because she had not considered the danger as serious and imminent. Now, however finding her will placed in opposition to that of a man of a strong, fierce, and determined mind, she quailed before him, and abandoned herself to violent weeping.

As de Bracy stood embarrassed and puzzled how to proceed, his thoughts were interrupted by the sound of the horn from outside which had already disturbed Front-de-Boeuf's interview with Isaac the Jew.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHILE the scenes we have described were passing in other parts of the castle, the Jewess Rebecca awaited her fate in a bare room at the top of the high tower.

It would be natural that one of her oppressed race would be treated with less consideration than a Saxon heiress; yet she had this advantage, that a natural strength of mind and character prepared her for the dangers to which she was exposed; for the lives of the Jews, wealthy as they were, were always liable to sudden reversals of fortune.

The prisoner trembled, however, and changed colour, when a step was heard on the stair, and the door of the turret-chamber slowly opened, and a tall man, dressed as one of those bandits to whom they owed their misfortune, slowly entered, and shut the door behind him. She had already unclasped two costly bracelets and a collar, which she hastened to offer to the supposed outlaw.

“Take these,” she said, “good friend, and for God’s sake be merciful to me and my aged father! He will give thee yet more if can escape.”

“Fair flower of Palestine,” replied the outlaw in French; “I have made a vow to prefer beauty to wealth.”

“Thou art no outlaw,” said Rebecca. “No outlaw would refuse such offers. No outlaw in this land uses the language in which thou hast spoken. Thou art no outlaw, but a Norman.”

“I am not an outlaw;” said Brian de Bois-Guilbert. “I am one who will rather hang thy neck and arms with pearls and diamonds, which so well become them, than deprive thee of these ornaments.”

"What wouldst thou have of me," said Rebecca, "if not my wealth?—We can have nought in common between us—you are a Christian—I am a Jewess. Our union would be contrary to the laws alike of the church and of the synagogue."

"That may be so," said the Templar; "but the Church need not know. Or thou can't change thy religion. Submit to thy fate—embrace our religion, and thou shalt go forth in such state, that many a Norman lady shall yield as well in pomp as in beauty to the favourite of the best lance among the Templars."

"Submit to my fate!" said Rebecca—"and, sacred Heaven! to what fate?—embrace thy religion! and what religion can it be that harbours such a villain?—*thou* the best lance of the Templars!—False knight!—I spit at thee, and I defy thee."

The eyes of the Templar flashed fire at this defiance. "Listen," he said; "I have hitherto spoken mildly to thee, but now my language shall be that of a conqueror. Thou art my captive, and if thou wilt not yield to my entreaties, then thou shalt yield to necessity and my compulsion."

"Stand back," said Rebecca—"stand back, and hear me, before you commit a sin so deadly! My strength thou mayst indeed overpower, for God made women weak, and trusted their defence to man's generosity. But I will proclaim thy villainy, Templar, from one end of Europe to the other. They will hold thee accursed for having so far dishonoured the cross thou wearest as to follow a daughter of my people."

"But except at my will thou shall never leave this Castle; and even within it no one will ever hear thy cries for help from this high tower."

"Even yet, however, there is a way of escape from this infamy." And as she spoke she threw open the latticed window and stood on the very verge of the parapet, with not the slightest

screen between her and the tremendous depth below. Unprepared for such a desperate effort, Bois-Guilbert had neither time to intercept nor to stop her. As he was about to advance, she exclaimed, "Remain where thou art, proud Templar, or at thy choice advance! —one foot nearer, and I throw myself down."

The Templar hesitated, and a resolution which had never yielded to pity or distress gave way to his admiration of her courage. "Come down," he said, "rash girl! —I swear I will never throw thee off hence."

"I will not trust thee, Templar," said Rebecca.

"You do me injustice," exclaimed the Templar fervently; "I swear to you by the name which I bear—by the cross on my bosom—by the sword on my side I will do thee no injury whatsoever! If not for thyself, yet for thy father's sake forbear. I will be his friend, and in this castle he will need a powerful one."

"Alas!" said Rebecca, "I know it but too well—dare I trust thee?"

"May my name be dishonoured," said he, "if thou shalt have reason to complain of me! Many a law, many a commandment, have I broken, but my word never."

"I will, then, trust thee," said Rebecca, "thus far;" and she descended from the parapet, but remained standing near by it. "Here," she said, "I take my stand. Remain where thou art."

While Rebecca spoke thus, her high and firm resolve, which corresponded so well with the beauty of her face gave to her looks, air, and manner, a dignity that seemed more than mortal. Her cheek did not pale with fear of a fate so horrible; on the contrary, the thought that she had her fate at her command, and could escape at will from infamy to death, gave a yet deeper colour to her complexion, and a yet more brilliant fire to her eye.

Bois-Guilbert, proud himself and high-spirited, thought he had never beheld beauty so animated and so commanding.

"Let there be peace between us, Rebecca," he said.

"Peace, if thou wilt," answered Rebecca—"Peace—but with this space between."

"Thou needst no longer fear me," said Bois-Guilbert. "I am not naturally that which thou hast seen me, hard, selfish, and relentless." At this point he too was interrupted by the sound of the horn outside. "That bugle-sound announces something which may require my presence. Think of what I have said.—Farewell! I will soon return, and hold further conference with thee."

He left the turret-chamber, and descended the stair, leaving Rebecca scarcely more terrified at the thought of the death to which she had been so lately exposed, than at the fearful designs of the bold bad man in whose power she found herself so unhappily placed.

Yet her first act was to give thanks to God, for his protection, and to pray that it should be continued for her and her aged father, and for the wounded knight who also was in the hands of enemies.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE Templar, De Bracy, and Front-de-Bœuf met in the hall of the Castle, all having been disturbed by the sound of the bugle.

“ Let us see the cause of this infernal clamour,” said Front-de-Bœuf ; “ here is a letter.”

“ Give it to me,” said the Templar. “ It seems to be a formal letter of defiance,” he continued ; “ but if it is not a foolish jest, it is the most extraordinary challenge ever sent to a baronial castle.”

“ Who dares to jest with me ?” said Front-de-Bœuf. “ Read it out.”

The Templar accordingly read it out.

“ I, Wamba, the son of Witless, jester to a noble and free-born man, Cedric of Rotherwood, called the Saxon—And I, Gurth, the son of Beowulph, swineherd to the said Cedric, with the assistance of our allies and confederates, namely, the good knight, called for the present *The Black Sluggard* and the stout forester, Robert Locksley, inform you, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, and your allies and accomplices that whereas you have wrongfully seized upon the person of our lord and master, the said Cedric, the Lady Rowena, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and also a certain, Jew, named Isaac of York, together with his daughter, a Jewess ; and certain of their followers, as well as horses and mules ; therefore we require and demand that the said persons, together with all their goods and chattels be, within an hour after the delivery hereof, delivered to us, untouched and unarmed in body and goods. Failing which, we warn you that we hold you as robbers

and traitors and will oppose you in battle, siege, or otherwise, and do our utmost to your annoyance and destruction."

The knights heard this astonishing document read from end to end, and then gazed upon each other in silent amazement, as being utterly at a loss to know what it could mean. De Bracy was the first to break silence by an uncontrollable fit of laughter, wherein he was joined, though with more moderation, by the Templar. Front-de-Bœuf, on the contrary, seemed impatient of their ill-timed jocularity.

"I give you plain warning," he said, "that you had better consult how to act under these circumstances, than give way to such misplaced merriment.—Here, fellow," he added to one of his attendants, "hast thou sent out to see by what force this challenge is supported ? "

"There are at least two hundred men assembled in the woods," answered a squire who was in attendance.

"Here is a fine situation !" said Front-de-Bœuf ; "this comes of lending you the use of my castle."

"For shame, Sir Knight !" said the Templar. "Let us summon our people, and sally forth and attack them. One knight—ay, one man-at-arms should be enough for twenty such peasants."

"True," answered Front-de-Bœuf ; "were they Turks or Moors, Sir Templar, or the craven peasants of France, most valiant De Bracy ; but these are English yeomen, over whom we shall have no advantage, save what we may derive from our arms and horses, which will avail us little in the glades of the forest. Sally forth, saidst thou ? we have hardly men enough to defend the castle. The best of mine are at York ; so is all your band, De Bracy ; and we have scarcely twenty, besides the handful that were engaged in this mad business."

"Thou dost not fear," said the Templar, "that they can assemble in force sufficient to attempt the castle ? "

"Not so, Sir Brian," answered Front-de-Bœuf. "These outlaws have indeed a daring captain ; but without scaling ladders, and experienced leaders, my castle may defy them."

"Send to thy neighbours," said the Templar, "let them assemble their people, and come to the rescue of three knights, besieged by a jester and a swineherd in the baronial castle of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf!"

"You jest, Sir Knight," answered the baron ; "but to whom should I send ?—Malvoisin is by this time at York with his followers."

"Then send to York, and recall our people," said De Bracy
"My band also is there."

"And who shall bear such a message ?" said Front-de-Bœuf
"they will beset every path."

I have it," he added, after pausing for a moment—"Sir Templar, thou canst write as well as read, and thou shalt return an answer to this bold challenge."

"I would rather do it at the sword's point than at that of the pen," said Bois-Guilbert ; "but be it as you will."

He sat down accordingly, and wrote in French the following letter :—

"Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf receives no defiance at the hands of slaves or fugitives. If the person calling himself the Black Knight is indeed a Knight, he ought to know that he stands degraded by his present association, and has no right to expect consideration at the hands of men of noble blood. As to the prisoners we have made, we request you in Christian charity to send a man of religion, to receive their confession ; since it is our fixed intention to execute them before noon."

This letter was delivered to the messenger, who returned to the headquarters of the allies, which were for the present

established under a venerable oak-tree, a few hundred yards distant from the castle. Here Wamba and Gurth, with their allies the Black Knight and Locksley, and the jovial hermit, awaited with impatience an answer to their summonses. Around them were some two hundred outlaws, and others were fast coming in. Those whom they obeyed as leaders were only distinguished from the others by a feather in the cap, their dress, arms, and equipment being in all other respects the same.

Beside these bands, a less orderly and a worse armed force consisting of the Saxon inhabitants of the neighbouring township, as well as many bondsmen and servants from Cedric's extensive estate, had already arrived, for the purpose of assisting in his rescue.

It was to the leaders of this motley army that the Templar's letter was delivered.

The Black Knight first read it over to himself, and then explained its contents in Saxon to his confederates.

“ Execute the noble Cedric ! ” explained Wamba ; thou must be mistaken, Sir Knight.”

“ Not I, my worthy friend,” replied the knight, “ I have explained the words as they are here set down.”

“ ‘Tis but a contrivance to gain time,” said Locksley ; “ they dare not do a deed for which I could exact a fearful penalty.”

“ I wish,” said the Black Knight, “ there were some one among us who could obtain admission into the castle, and discover the strength of the besieged. It seems to me that, as they require a confessor to be sent, this holy hermit might at the same time hear the confessions of the prisoners, and obtain the information we want.”

“ A plague on thee, and thy advice ! ” said the hermit ; “ I tell thee, Sir Slothful Knight, that when I take off my friar's frock,

my priesthood, my sanctity, my very Latin are put off along with it."

"I fear," said the Black Knight, "there is no one here that is both willing and qualified to take upon him, for the occasion the character of father confessor?"

All looked on each other, and were silent.

"I see," said Wamba, after a short pause, "that the fool must be still the fool, and put his neck in the venture which wise men shrink from. I was bred to be a friar, until a brain-fever came upon me and left me just wit enough to be a fool. I trust, with the assistance of the good hermit's frock, I shall be found qualified to administer both wordly and spiritual comfort to our worthy master Cedric, and his companions in adversity."

"Hath he sense enough, thinkest thou?" said the Black Knight addressing Gurth.

"I know not," said Gurth; "but if he hath not, it will be the first time he hath lacked wit to turn his folly to account."

"On with the frock, then, good fellow," quoth the knight, "and let thy master send us an account of their situation within the castle. Their numbers must be few, and they may be beaten by a sudden and bold attack. Away with thee."

"And, in the meantime," said Locksley, "we will surround the place closely so that no one shall escape with a message."

CHAPTER XIX

SHORTLY afterwards Wamba, disguised in the hermit's frock and cowl, stood, trembling with fear, before the dreaded Front-de-Bœuf.

“ Who are you, and whence do you come ?” asked the Baron.

“ I am a poor friar,” replied Wamba, “ and I have been seized by outlaws, who made me come to this castle to hear the confessions of two prisoners, who are condemned to death.”

“ Very well. How many of those outlaws are there ?”

“ I was overcome with fear,” said the supposed friar, “ but there must be at least five hundred.”

“ What !” interrupted the Templar, who was also present ; “ Are there so many ?” And, taking the Baron aside, he continued, “ Let him be sent with a written order to De Bracy’s company of Free Companions, to come instantly to their master’s aid. In the meantime that he may suspect nothing, permit him to go freely about his task of preparing these Saxons for their death.”

“ It shall be so,” said Front de-Bœuf. And he ordered a domestic to conduct Wamba to the apartment where Cedric and Athelstane were confined.

“ Peace be with you,” said the jester, entering the apartment.

“ Enter,” answered Cedric to the supposed friar ; “ why hast thou come hither ?”

“ To bid you prepare yourselves for death,” answered the jester.

“ It is impossible !” replied Cedric, starting. “ Fearless and wicked as they are, they dare not attempt such open cruelty !

Hearest thou this, Athelstane? We must rouse up our hearts to this action, since it is better that we should die like men, than live like slaves."

"Wait yet a moment, good uncle," said the jester, in his natural tone.

"By my faith," said Cedric, "I should know that voice!"

"It is that of your trusty slave and jester," answered Wamba, throwing back his cowl. "Take a fool's advice and you will not be here long."

"What dost thou mean knave," asked the Saxon.

"Even thus," replied Wamba; "take thou this frock and hood, and go quietly out of the castle, leaving me your cloak and girdle instead."

"Leave thee in my place!" said Cedric, astonished at the proposal; "why, they would hang thee, my poor fellow."

"We shall see about that," said Wamba.

"Well, Wamba," answered Cedric, "I will grant thy request if thou wilt make the exchange of garments with Lord Athelstane instead of me."

"No, by Saint Dunstan," said Wamba, "I'll hang for no man but my own born master."

"Go, then, noble Cedric," said Athelstane, "neglect not this opportunity. Your presence outside may encourage friends to our rescue—your remaining here would ruin us all."

"And is there any prospect, then, of rescue?" said Cedric, looking at the jester.

"Prospect, indeed!" echoed Wamba; "let me tell you, five hundred men are there outside, and I was this morning one of their leaders. Well, we shall see what good they will make by exchanging a fool for a wise man. Farewell, master, and be kind to poor Gurth, and in the hall at Rotherwood do not forget your poor jester."

The tears stood in Cedric's eyes. "Thy memory shall be preserved," he said, "while fidelity and affection have honour upon earth. But if it were not that I trust I shall find the means of saving Rowena, and thee, Athelstane, and thee also, my poor Wamba, thou shouldst not overbear me in this matter."

The exchange of dress was now accomplished, when a sudden doubt struck Cedric.

"I know no language," he said, "but my own, and a few words of Norman. How shall I bear myself like a friar?"

"You have only to say 'Peace be with you' in answer to all questions" replied Wamba; "and no one will suspect you."

Cedric had soon to use his password. In a dark passage he was stopped by a female.

"Peace be with you," he said, and tried to hurry on, excusing himself in Saxon.

But the reply came in the same language, "I beg you, holy father, to visit and pray for a wounded prisoner in this castle."

As the supposed friar was explaining that he was in great haste, which was perfectly true, they were interrupted by an old woman, who ordered the younger one back to the wounded man's chamber, and then spoke to the friar, whose Saxon speech she had just heard.

"Come this way, father," said the old hag; "thou art a stranger in this castle, and canst not leave it without a guide. Come hither, for I would speak with thee."

She conducted the unwilling Cedric into a small apartment, the door of which she secured. "Thou art a Saxon, father," she said, "and the sounds of my native language are sweet to mine ears. I was not born, father, the wretch that now thou seest me. The wrinkled hag before thee was once the daughter of the noble Thane of Torquilstone."

"Thou the daughter of Torquil Wolfganger!" said Cedric; "thou—thou—the daughter of that noble Saxon, my father's friend!"

"Thy father's friend!" echoed the woman, whose name was Ulrica, "then Cedric the Saxon stands before me. But if thou art Cedric of Rotherwood, why this religious dress?"

"It matters not who I am," said Cedric; "proceed, unhappy woman, with thy tale!"

"Guess it, but ask it not.—Here—here I dwelt, till premature age has stamped its ghastly features on my countenance—scorned and insulted where I was once obeyed, and compelled to live as a menial."

"Now I think of nothing but revenge; and my opportunity is at hand. There is outside a force surrounding this accursed castle—haste: to lead them to the attack, and when thou shalt see a red flag wave from the turret on the eastern angle of the tower press the Normans hard—they will then have enough to do within, and you may gain the wall with little trouble. Now go!"

As she thus spoke, she vanished through a private door, and Front-de-Bœuf entered the apartment.

"Hast thou prepared the prisoners for death?"

"I found them," said Cedric, in such French as he could command, "expecting the worst."

"Follow me through this passage, then, that I may dismiss thee by the postern." And as he strode on his way before the supposed friar, Front-de-Bœuf thus schooled him in the part which he desired he should act.

"Thou seest, Sir Friar, you herd of Saxon swine, who have dared to besiege this castle of Torquilstone.—Tell them whatever thou hast a mind of the weakness of this fortress, or aught else that can detain them before it for twenty-four hours. Meantime bear this letter to the castle of Philip de Malvoisin; say it cometh

from me, and that I pray him to send it to York with all the speed man and horse can make."

Front-de-Boeuf, in the meanwhile, led the way to a postern, where, passing the moat on a single plank, they reached a small barbican, or exterior defence, which communicated with the open field by a well-fortified gate.

" Begone, then."

As they parted at the postern door, he thrust into Cedric's reluctant hand a gold byzant, adding, " Remember, I will flay thee if thou failest in thy purpose."

" And full leave will I give thee to do so," answered Cedric, leaving the postern, striding forth over the open field with a joyful step, " if, when we meet next, I deserve not better at thine hand. Assuredly we shall meet again."

Front-de-Boeuf then ordered Cedric and Athelstane to be brought before him that he might speak with them about the ransom they were willing to pay for their freedom. His rage was great when he discovered that the supposed Cedric was merely the poor Jester ; and that they had not only let one of their valuable prisoners escape in the friar's gown, but that they had also allowed their message for help to fall into the enemies' hands.

They made Athelstane promise to pay a ransom of a thousand marks for the freedom of himself and his companions.

" And thou wilt moreover assure us of the retreat of that scum of mankind who are swarming around the castle" said Front-de-Boeuf.

" In so far as I can," answered Athelstane, " I will withdraw them."

"We are agreed then," said Front-de-Bœuf; "thou and they are to be set at freedom, and peace is to be on both sides, for payment of a thousand marks in exchange of your persons. But this does not extend to the Jew, Isaac."

"Nor to Isaac's daughter," said the Templar.

"Neither does the ransom include the Lady Rowena," said De Bracy. "It shall never be said I was scared out of a fair prize without striking a blow for it."

"Neither," said Front-de-Bœuf, "does our treaty refer to this wretched Jester, whom I retain, that I may make him an example to every knave who turns his back in earnest."

"The Lady Rowena," answered Athelstane, with the most steady countenance, "is betrothed to me. I will be dragged by wild horses before I consent to part with her. The slave Wamba has this day saved the life of my friend Cedric--I will not agree that he should be injured."

"The Lady Rowena betrothed to a vassal like thee?" said De Bracy; "Saxon I tell thee, Princes of the House of Anjou do not confer their wards on men of such lineage as thine."

"My lineage, proud Norman," replied Athelstane, "is drawn from a source more pure and ancient than thine. Kings were my ancestors, strong in war and wise in council."

At this point they were interrupted by the arrival at the castle of a monk named Ambrose, who informed them that his master Prior Aymar of Jorvalx had been captured by the outlaws, and begged them for help. But he also told them that the outlaws were just about to attack the castle.

This news caused them to hasten to the battlements, and they found that the attackers were raising a bank of earth and bringing forward great wooden shields for protection against arrows

from the walls. From the orderly way in which they made their arrangements, it was clear that they had received instructions from some one skilled in the art of war; and they soon caught sight of that same knight in black armour who had fought in the lists at Ashby. Each knight then went to his post—De Bracy on the eastern side, Bois-Guilbert on the western, Front-de-Bœuf at the barbican, or fortified entrance of the castle—and waited for the attack to commence.

CHAPTER XX.

MEANWHILE we must go back to see what had become of Wilfred of Ivanhoe. When, as a result of his wound and the loss of blood which followed, he had fainted in the lists at Ashby, Rebecca the Jewess had, after persuading her father, caused him to be placed in her litter and carried to their lodging. There she tended him, and hoped that, with the help of some wonderful medicinal herbs, of which she had learnt from the daughter of a famous Jewish Doctor, she would soon cure his wound and restore him to strength.

Isaac would have handed him over to some Christian ; but his daughter was unwilling to entrust her secret remedy to anyone else, and she reminded him that as Ivanhoe was a favourite of King Richard, and could protect him in case Richard heard of the money which he had lent to Prince John.

Thus he travelled in Rebecca's litter towards York, and was captured as we have seen by De Bracy's party and taken to Torquinstone. De Bracy had set two of his men to guard the wounded knight, but when they were required for the defence Rebecca had been sent to watch over Wilfred after the Templar had left her, and it was she who first stopped Cedric in his disguise as a friar.

Soon after this the noise, both inside and outside the castle, increased, and it was evident that some attack was about to commence. The voices of the knights were heard, animating their followers, or directing means of defence, while their commands were often drowned in the shouts of those whom they addressed. Rebecca's eye kindled, although the blood fled from her cheeks.

But Ivanhoe was like the war-horse, glowing with impatience at his inactivity, and with his ardent desire to mingle in the affray. " If I could but drag myself," he said, " to yonder window, that I might see how this attack is likely to go!—If I had but a battle-axe to strike were it but a single blow for our deliverance!—It is in vain—it is in vain—I am alike weak and weaponless!"

" Do not be anxious;" answered Rebecca, " the sounds have ceased. There may be no battle."

" Thou knowest nothing of it," said Wilfred impatiently; " this dead pause only shows that the men are at their posts on the walls, and expecting an instant attack; what we have heard was but the distant muttering of the storm—it will burst soon in all its fury.—Could I but reach yonder window!"

" Thou wilt but injure thyself by the attempt, noble knight," replied his attendant. Observing his extreme anxiety, she firmly added, " I myself will stand at the window and describe to you as best I can what passes without."

" You must not—you shall not!" exclaimed Ivanhoe; " each window will be soon a mark for the archers; some random arrow"—

" It shall be welcome!" murmured Rebecca, as with firm pace she ascended two or three steps, which led to the window of which they spoke.

" Rebecca, dear Rebecca!" exclaimed Ivanhoe, " this is no maiden's pastime—do not expose thyself to wounds and death, and render me for ever miserable for having been the cause; at least, show as little of your person at the window as you can."

Following the directions of Ivanhoe, Rebecca, with tolerable security to herself, could witness part of what was passing outside the castle, and report to Ivanhoe the preparations which the assailants were making for the assault. " The skirts of the

wood," she said, " seem lined with archers, although only a few are advanced from its dark shadow."

" Under what banner ? " asked Ivanhoe.

" Under no ensign of war which I can observe," answered Rebecca.

" A singular novelty," muttered the knight, " to advance to storm such a castle without banner displayed !—Seest thou who act as leaders ? "

" A knight, clad in black armour, is the most conspicuous," said the Jewess ; " he alone is armed from head to heel, and seems to assume the direction of all around him."

" What device does he bear on his shield ? " replied Ivanhoe.

" Something resembling a bar of iron, and a padlock painted blue on the black shield."

Her description was here suddenly interrupted by the signal for assault, which was given by the blast of a shrill bugle, and at once answered by a flourish of the Norman trumpets from the battlements.

" And I must lie here like a bedridden monk," exclaimed Ivanhoe, " while the game that gives me freedom or death is played out by the hands of others !—Look from the window once again, kind maiden, but beware that you are not marked by the archers beneath."

With patient courage, Rebecca again took post at the lattice, sheltering himself, however, so as not to be visible from beneath.

" What dost thou see, Rebecca ? " again demanded the wounded knight.

" Nothing but a cloud of arrows flying so thick as to dazzle mine eyes, and to hide the bowmen who shoot them."

" That cannot endure," said Ivanhoe ; " if they press not right on to carry the castle by pure force of arms, the archery can avail but the little against stone walls and bulwarks. Look for the Knight, fair Rebecca, and see how he bears himself ; for as the leader is, so will his followers be."

" He heads a body of men close under the outer barrier of the barbican.—They pull down the piles and palisades ; they hew down the barriers with axes.—They have made a breach in the barriers—they rush in—they are thrust back !—Front-de-Bœuf heads the defenders ; I see his gigantic form above them all. They press again to the breach, and it is disputed hand to hand, and man to man."

She turned her head from the lattice, as if unable longer to endure a sight so terrible.

" Look forth again, Rebecca," said Ivanhoe, mistaking the cause of her retiring ; " the archery must in some degree have ceased, since they are now fighting hand to hand.—Look again, there is now less danger."

Rebecca again looked forth, and almost immediately exclaimed, "Front-de-Bœuf and the Black Knight fight hand to hand on the breach, amid the roar of their followers, who watch the progress of the strife." She then uttered a loud shriek and exclaimed, " He is down !—he is down ! "

" Who is down ?" cried Ivanhoe.

" The Black Knight," answered Rebecca faintly ; then instantly again shouted with joyful eagerness—" But no—but no !—he is on foot again, and fights as if there were twenty men's strength in his single arm—His sword is broken—he snatches an axe from a yeoman—he presses Front-de-Bœuf with blow on blow.—The giant stoops and totters like an oak under the steel of the woodman—he falls—he falls !"

" Front-de-Bœuf ?" exclaimed Ivanhoe.

"Front-de-Bœuf!" answered the Jewess; "his men rush to the rescue, headed by the haughty Templar--their united force compels the champion to pause--they drag Front-de-Bœuf within the walls."

"The assailants have won the barriers, have they not?" said Ivanhoe.

"They have--they have!" exclaimed Rebecca--"and they press the besieged hard upon the outer wall; some plant ladders some swarm like bees, and endeavour to ascend upon the shoulders of each other--down go stones, beams, and trunks of trees upon their heads, and as fast as they bear the wounded to the rear, fresh men supply their places in the assault. The ladders are thrown down, and the men lie grovelling under them like crushed reptiles.--The besieged have the better."

"Saint George strike for us!" exclaimed the knight; "do the false yeomen give way?"

"No!" exclaimed Rebecca, "they bear themselves right yeomanly--the Black Knight approaches the postern with his huge axe--the thundering blows which he deals, you may hear them above all the din and shouts of the battle.--Stones and beams are hailed down on the bold champion--he regards them no more than if they were thistledown or feathers!"

"By Saint John," said Ivanhoe, raising himself joyfully on his couch, "there is but one man in England that might do such a deed!"

"The postern-gate shakes," continued Rebecca; "it crashes--it is splintered by his blows--they rush in--the outwork is won--they hurl the defenders from the battlements--they throw them into the moat.--O men, if ye be indeed men, spare them that can resist no longer!"

"The bridge--the bridge which communicates with the castle--have they won that?" exclaimed Ivanhoe.

"No," replied Rebecca, "the Templar has destroyed the plank on which they crossed—few of the defenders escaped with him into the castle—the shrieks and cries which you hear tell the fate of the others.—Alas ! I see it is more difficult to look upon victory than upon battle."

"What are they doing now, maiden ?" said Ivanhoe ; "look forth yet again—this is no time to faint at bloodshed."

"It is over for the time," answered Rebecca ; our friends strengthen themselves within the outwork which they have mastered."

"Our friends," said Wilfred, "will surely not abandon an enterprise so gloriously begun ! O no ! I will put my faith in the good knight whose axe hath rent oak and bars of iron.—Singular," he again muttered to himself, "if there be two who can do such a deed. Seest thou nought else, Rebecca, by which the Black Knight may be distinguished ?"

"Nothing," said the Jewess ; "all about him is black as the raven. Nothing can I spy that can mark him further—but having once seen him put forth his strength in battle, I could know him again among a thousand warriors. He rushes to the fray as if he were summoned to a banquet. There is more than mere strength ; there seems as if the whole soul and spirit of the champion were given to every blow which he deals upon his enemies. God forgive him the sin of bloodshed !—it is fearful, yet magnificent, to behold how the arm and heart of one man can triumph over hundreds."

"Rebecca," said Ivanhoe, "thou hast painted a hero ; surely they rest but to refresh their force, or to provide the means of crossing the moat. Under such a leader they will never give up till they have completed their success."

During the interval which followed, Ivanhoe, worn out by the excitement, fell asleep again, still watched over by the faithful Rebecca.

CHAPTER XXI.

MEANWHILE Front-de-Bœuf lay upon a bed in extreme agony of body and mind. His conscience troubled him with disquieting thoughts, for he knew that his hour of death was at hand. He was startled therefore the more to hear a shrill, broken voice calling upon him to remember the terrible sins of which he had been guilty—rebellion, robbery, murder. In vain did the dying baron beg to be allowed to die in peace.

“In peace thou shalt NOT die,” cried the voice; “even in death shalt thou think of thy murders—of the groans which this castle echoed—on the blood that stains its floors of the father thou hast slain.”

“Thou art Ulrica, then;” said he; “for no other knows of that deed of my youth. Hast thou come to exult over my end?”

“Ay, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,” answered she, “it is Ulrica!—it is the daughter of the murdered Torquil Wolfganger! it is the sister of the slaughtered sons! Thou hast been my evil angel, Front-de-Bœuf, and I will be thine—I will dog thee to the very instant of death! Thou shalt die no soldier’s death, but one prepared for thee by my hands. Dost thou not remember the store of fuel beneath this room?”

Already indeed smoke was entering the chamber, and it was evident that the castle was in flames. Ulrica as she left the room locked the great door behind her, and left the baron to his fearful death. The smoke came in thicker and thicker, and the fire caught upon the floor below. In vain did he shout, and his cries grew weaker and weaker.

Meanwhile Ulrica climbed to the top of the tower to display the red flag, according to her promise to Cedric, as a signal for the besiegers to press home their attack.

Meanwhile when the barbican was carried, the Black Knight had sent a message to Locksley, requesting him to keep such a strict observation on the castle as might prevent the defenders from combining their force for a sudden sally, and recovering the outwork which they had lost.

The knight employed the interval in causing to be constructed a sort of raft or floating bridge, by means of which he hoped to cross the moat in spite of the resistance of the enemy. This was a work of some time, which the leaders the less regretted, as it gave Ulrica leisure to execute her plan of diversion in their favour, whatever that might be.

When the raft was completed, the Black Knight shouted to the besiegers :—“ Fling open the door, and launch the floating bridge.”

The gate which led from the inner wall of the barbican to the moat, and which corresponded with a gate in the main wall of the castle, was now suddenly opened ; the temporary bridge was then thrust forward over the water forming a slippery and dangerous passage for two men abreast to cross the moat. Well aware of the importance of taking the foe by surprise, the Black Knight, closely followed by Cedric, threw himself upon the bridge, and reached the opposite side. Here he began to thunder with his axe upon the gate of the castle, protected in part by the ruins of the former drawbridge from arrows and stones cast by the defenders.

“ Shame on ye all !” cried De Bracy to the soldiers around him ; “ do ye call yourselves crossbow-men, and let these two dogs keep their station under the walls of the castle ?—Heave over the coping stones from the battlement !

At this moment the besiegers caught sight of the red flag upon the angle of the tower which Ulrica had described to Cedric. Locksley was the first who was aware of it, as he was

hastening to the outwork, impatient to see the progress of the assault.

“ Saint George !” he cried, “ Saint George for England !—To the charge, bold yeomen !—the castle is ours, we have friends within—See yonder flag, it is the appointed signal.—Torquilstone is ours !”

With that he bent his good bow, and sent a shaft right through the breast of one of the men-at-arms, who, under De Bracy’s direction, was loosening a fragment from one of the battlements to let fall on to the heads of Cedric and the Black Knight. De Bracy was taking his place when the voice of the Templar sounded close in his ear.

“ All is lost, De Bracy, the castle burns. It is all in a flame on the western side. I have striven in vain to extinguish it. Lead thy men down, as if to a sally ; throw the postern-gate open.—There are but two men who occupy the float, fling them into the moat, and push across to the barbican. I will charge from the main gate, and attack the barbican on the outside.”

De Bracy hastily drew his men together, and rushed down to the postern-gate, which he caused instantly to be thrown open. But no sooner was this done than the Black Knight forced his way inward in spite of De Bracy and his followers.

“ Dogs !” said De Bracy, “ will ye let two men bar our only path of escape ?”

“ He is the devil !” said a veteran man-at-arms, recoiling from the blows of their antagonist.

“ And if he be the devil,” replied De Bracy, “ would you fly from him ?—the castle burns behind us, villains !—let despair give you courage, or let me forward, I will deal with this champion myself.”

The vaulted passages to which the postern gave entrance, and in which these two redoubted champions were now fighting hand

to hand, rang with the furious blows which they dealt each other, De Bracy with his sword, the Black Knight with his ponderous axe. At length the Norman received a blow, which descended with such violence on his crest, that he measured his length on the paved floor.

“Yield, De Bracy,” said the Black Champion, stooping over him, and holding against the bars of his helmet the fatal poniard with which the knights despatched their enemies (and which was called the dagger of mercy)—“yield, or thou art but a dead man.”

“I will not yield,” replied De Bracy faintly, “to an unknown conqueror. Tell me thy name, or work thy pleasure on me—it shall never be said that Maurice de Bracy was prisoner to a nameless churl.”

The Black Knight whispered something into the ear of the vanquished.

“I yield me to be true prisoner, rescue or no rescue,” answered the Norman, in a tone of sullen submission.

“Go to the barbican,” said the victor, “and there wait for my further orders.”

“Yet first let me tell you,” said De Bracy, “that Wilfred of Ivanhoe is wounded, and prisoner, and will perish in the burning castle without immediate help.”

“Wilfred of Ivanhoe!” exclaimed the Black Knight,—“prisoner, and perish!—The life of every man in the castle shall answer it if a hair of his head be signed—Show me his chamber!”

“Ascend yonder winding stair,” said De Bracy; “it leads to his apartment.”

During this combat and the brief conversation which ensued, Cedric, at the head of a body of men, among whom the Friar was conspicuous, pushed across the bridge as soon as they saw

the postern open, and drove back the dispirited and despairing followers of De Bracy, of whom some asked quarter, some offered vain resistance, and the greater part fled towards the court-yard. De Bracy himself arose from the ground, took off his helmet in token of submission, and went to the barbican.

As the fire grew, symptoms of it became soon apparent in the chamber where Ivanhoe was watched and tended by the Jewess Rebecca. He had been awakened from his brief slumber by the noise of the battle; and his attendant, who had again placed herself at the window to watch and report to him the fate of the attack, was for some time prevented from observing by the increase of the stifling vapour. At length the volumes of smoke which rolled into the apartment—the cries for water, which were heard even above the din of the battle, made them aware of the rapid progress of this new danger.

“The castle is burning” said Rebecca. “What can we do to save ourselves?”

“Fly, Rebecca, and save thine own life,” said Ivanhoe, “for no human aid can save me.”

“I will not fly,” answered Rebecca; “we will be saved or perish together—And yet, great God!—my father, my father—what will be his fate!”

At this moment the door of the apartment flew open, and the Templar presented himself,—a ghastly figure, for his gilded armour was broken and bloody. “I have found thee,” said he to Rebecca; “thou shalt see I will keep my word to share weal and woe with thee—There is but one path to safety; I have cut my way through fifty dangers to point it to thee—up, and instantly follow me.”

“Alone,” answered Rebecca, “I will not follow thee. If thou hast but a touch of human charity in thee—if thy heart be not as

hard as thy breastplate--save my aged father--save this wounded knight!"

"A knight," answered the Templar, with his characteristic calmness, "a knight, Rebecca, must encounter his fate, whether it meet him in the shape of sword or flame--and who cares how or where a Jew meets with his?"

"Savage warrior," said Rebecca, "rather will I perish in the flames than accept safety from thee!"

"Thou shalt not choose, Rebecca--once didst thou foil me, but never mortal did so twice."

So saying, he seized on the terrified maiden, who filled the air with her shrieks, and bore her out of the room in his arms, without regarding the menaces and defiance which Ivanhoe thundered against him.

The Black Knight, at that instant entered the apartment, exclaiming, "I should not have found thee, Wilfred, but for thy shouts."

"If thou be'st true knight," said Wilfred, "think not of me--save the Lady Rowena--look to the noble Cedric!"

"In their turn," answered he; "but thine is first." And seizing upon Ivanhoe, he bore him off with as much ease as the Templar had carried off Rebecca, rushed with him to the postern, and, having there delivered his burden to the care of two yeomen, he again entered the castle to assist in the rescue of the other prisoners.

The besiegers pursued the defenders of the castle from chamber to chamber. Most of the garrison resisted to the last--few of them asked quarter--none received it. The air was filled with groans and clashing of arms--the floors were slippery with the blood of despairing and expiring wretches.

Through this scene of confusion, Cedric rushed in quest of Rowena, and reached his ward's apartment just as she had abandoned all hopes of safety. He committed her to the charge of Gurth, to be conducted in safety to the barbican, the road to which was now cleared of the enemy, and not yet interrupted by the flames. This accomplished, the loyal Cedric hastened in quest of his friend Athelstane. But ere Cedric penetrated as far as the old hall in which he had himself been a prisoner, Wamba had procured freedom for himself and his companion in adversity.

When the noise of the conflict announced that it was at the hottest, the jester began to shout with the utmost power of his lungs, "Saint George and the Dragon!—Saint George for merry England!—The castle is won!" And banged against each other two or three pieces of rusty armour.

The guard took fright at Wamba's clamour, and, leaving the door open behind them, ran to tell the Templar that foemen had entered the old hall. Meantime the prisoners found no difficulty in making their escape into the ante-room, and from there into the court of the castle. Here was the fierce Templar, mounted on horseback, surrounded by several of the garrison both on horse and foot. The drawbridge had been lowered by his orders, but the passage was beset; for the archers no sooner saw the flames breaking out, and the bridge lowered, than they thronged to the entrance, to prevent the escape of the garrison, and to secure their own share of booty ere the castle should be burnt down. On the other hand, a party of the besiegers who had entered by the postern were now issuing out into the court yard, and attacking with fury the remnant of the defenders, who were thus assaulted on both sides at once.

Animated, however, by despair, and supported by the example of their indomitable leader, the remaining soldiers of the castle

fought with the utmost valour ; and, being well-armed, succeeded more than once in driving back the assailants, though much inferior in numbers. Rebecca, placed on horseback before one of the Templar's Saracen slaves, was in the midst of the little party ; and Bois-Guilbert, notwithstanding the confusion of the bloody fray, showed every attention to her safety. Repeatedly he was by her side, and, neglecting his own defence, held before her his triangular shield.

Athelstane, who was lazy, but not cowardly, beheld the female form whom the Templar protected thus sedulously, and doubted not that it was Rowena whom the knight was carrying off.

"By the soul of Saint Edward," he said, "I will rescue her from yonder over-proud knight, and he shall die by my hand !"

"Think what you do!" cried Wamba. "That is not my Lady Rowena ; and you have no armour or helmet."

But Athelstane, now roused to action, paid no attention.

To snatch a mace from the pavement,—to rush on the Templar's band, and to strike in quick succession to the right and left, levelling a warrior at each blow, was, for Athelstane's great strength, now animated with unusual fury, but the work of a few moments ; he was soon within two yards of Bois-Guilbert, whom he defied in his loudest tone.

"Turn, false-hearted Templar ! let go her whom thou art unworthy to touch !"

"Dog !" said the Templar, grinding his teeth ; and half-wheeling his steed towards the Saxon, he discharged a fearful blow upon the head of Athelstane.

The weapon cut through the handle of the mace with which the Saxon tried to parry the stroke and descended on to his head. Athelstane fell to the ground and lay motionless.

Taking advantage of the dismay which was spread by the fall of Athelstane, and calling aloud, "Those who would save themselves,

follow me ! ", the templar pushed across the drawbridge, dispersing the archers who would have intercepted them. He was followed by his Saracens, and some five or six mounted men-at-arms.

Those defenders who remained fought hopelessly for a short time, and then as darkness was falling fled to the forest.

The fire had spread rapidly to all parts of the castle ; wall after wall was crashing down, when on the turret appeared the half-mad Ulrica, waving the red flag in exultation at the destruction she had caused in the house of her oppressor, and singing a Saxon war-song. At length the roof of the turret too fell in with a terrific crash, and, still exultant, she perished in the flames.

An awful pause of horror silenced the spectators, who, for the space of several minutes, stirred not a finger. The voice of Locksley was then heard, " Shout, yeomen ! —the den of tyrants is no more ! Let each bring his spoil to our chosen place of rendezvous at the Trysting-tree ; for there at break of day we will divide it fairly among our own bands, together with our worthy allies in this great deed of vengeance."

CHAPTER XXII

DAY had dawned upon the glades of the oak forest. The outlaws had all assembled around the Trysting-tree where they had spent the night around the heaps of plunder, which according to their strict laws was to be divided by their leader.

The place of rendezvous was an aged oak, which was the centre of a large open space. Here Locksley assumed his seat—a throne of turf erected under the twisted branches of the huge oak—and his followers were gathered around him. He assigned to the Black Knight a seat at his right hand, and to Cedric a place upon his left.

“Noble Cedric,” he said, turning to the Saxon, “that spoil is divided into two portions; make choice of what best suits thee, to recompense thy people who helped us in this adventure.”

“Good yeoman,” said Cedric, “I waited but to render my thanks to thee, and to thy bold men, for the life you have saved. Neither I nor my people will take any share of your booty. I am rich enough to reward them from my own wealth.”

“And some,” said Wamba, “have been wise enough to reward themselves; they do not march off empty-handed altogether. We are not all fools.”

“They are welcome,” said Locksley; “our laws bind none but ourselves.”

“But thou, my poor knave,” said Cedric, turning about and embracing his Jester, “how shall I reward thee, who feared not to give thy body to chains and death instead of mine!—All forsook me, when the poor fool was faithful! ”

A tear stood in the eye of the rough Thane as he spoke—a mark of feeling which even the death of Athelstane had not extracted; but there was something in the half-instinctive attachment of his clown, that waked his nature more keenly than even grief itself.

“Nay,” said the jester, “if you weep, the jester must weep for company, and then what becomes of his vocation, which is to jest?—But, uncle, if you would indeed please me, I pray you to pardon my playfellow Gurth, who stole a week from your service to bestow it on your son.”

“Pardon him!” exclaimed Cedric; “I will both pardon and reward him. Kneel down, Gurth.”—The swineherd knelt before his master. “Thou art no longer a thrall, but free; and I will give thee land for thyself from my estate.”

A smith was called, and the collar, which was the sign of slavery, was taken from his neck.

“Noble master!” he exclaimed; “doubled is my strength by your gift! There is a free spirit in my breast—I am a man.”

The tramp of horses was now heard, and the Lady Rowena appeared, surrounded by several riders, and a strong party of foot-men.

Her face was bright with thankfulness and hope. For she knew that Ivanhoe was safe, and she knew that Athelstane was dead. The former knowledge filled her with the most sincere delight; and if she did not absolutely rejoice at the latter, she might be pardoned for feeling the gladness of being freed from further persecution on the only subject in which she had ever been contradicted by her guardian Cedric.

As Rowena turned her steed towards Locksley’s seat, that bold yeoman, with all his followers, rose to receive her, as if by general instinct of courtesy. In a few words she expressed her gratitude to Locksley and his followers.

Cedric, before they departed, expressed his gratitude to the Black Champion, and earnestly entreated him to accompany him to Rotherwood.

"Cedric has already," said the knight,—"taught me the value of Saxon virtue. To Rotherwood will I come, brave Saxon, and that speedily; but, as now, pressing matters detain me from your halls. Perhaps, when I come, I will ask such a boon as will put even thy generosity to the test. Meanwhile, adieu."

"Valiant knight," said Locksley to the Black Champion, "without whose good heart and mighty arm our enterprise must altogether have failed, will it please you to take from that mass of spoil whatever may best please you?"

"I accept the offer," said the knight, "as frankly as it is given; and I ask permission to dispose of Sir Maurice de Bracy at my own pleasure."

"He is thine already," said Locksley, "and well for him! otherwise he would have hung from the highest bough of this oak."

"De Bracy," said the knight, "thou art free—depart. He whose prisoner thou art, scorns to take a mean revenge for what is past. But beware of the future. Maurice de Bracy, I say BEWARE!"

De Bracy bowed low and withdrew. He found his horse, threw himself upon the saddle, and galloped off through the wood.

When the bustle occasioned by this incident was somewhat composed, the chief outlaw took from his neck the rich horn which he had recently gained at the contest of archery near Ashby.

"Noble knight," he said, "if you disdain not to grace by your acceptance a bugle which an English yeoman has once worn, I will pray you to keep this as a memorial of your gallant bearing

—and if you chance to be in danger in any forest between Trent and Tees, sound three notes upon the horn thus, and you shall find helpers and rescue."

He then blew the bugle, and sounded once and again the call which he described, until the knight had learnt the notes.

"Thanks for the gift, bold yeoman," said the knight; "and better help than thine and thy men's would I never seek, were it at my utmost need." And then in his turn he sounded the call till all the greenwood rang.

"Well blown and clearly," said the yeoman.—"Comrades, mark these three notes—it is the call of the Black Knight; and he who hears it, and hastens not to serve him at his need, I will have him scourged out of our band with his bowstring."

"Long live our leader!" shouted the yeomen, "and long live the Black Knight! - May he soon use our service, to prove how readily it will be paid."

Locksley now proceeded to the distribution of the spoil, which he performed with the most laudable impartiality. A tenth part of the whole was set apart for the Church, and for pious uses; a portion was next allotted to a sort of public treasury; a part was assigned to the widows and children of those who had fallen. The rest was divided amongst the outlaws, according to their rank and merit, and the judgment of the Chief, on all such doubtful questions as occurred, was delivered with great shrewdness, and received with absolute submission. The Black Knight was not a little surprised to find that men, in a state so lawless, were nevertheless among themselves so regularly and equitably governed, and all that he observed added to his opinion of the justice and judgment of their leader.

When each had taken his own proportion of the booty, and while the treasurer, accompanied by four tall yeomen, was transporting that belonging to the state to some place of concealment

or of security, the portion devoted to the Church still remained unappropriated.

It was the duty of the hermit to take charge of this, and they anxiously wondered whether he had not gone into the cellars of Torquilstone to search for wine, and there perished when the walls fell in.

While they thus spoke, a loud shout among the men announced the arrival of him for whom they feared, as they learned from the stentorian voice of the Friar himself, long before they saw his burly person.

“ Make room, my merry-men !” he exclaimed ; “ room for your godly father and his prisoner—I come, noble leader like an eagle with my prey in my clutch.”—And making his way through the ring, amidst the laughter of all around, he appeared in majestic triumph, his huge battle-axe in one hand, and in the other a rope, one end of which was fastened to the neck of the unfortunate Isaac of York, who, bent down by sorrow and terror, was dragged on by the victorious priest.

“ Where did you find your prisoner ? ” asked Locksley.

“ I found him where I was looking for something better, ” replied the friar. “ I went to the cellars to see what wine might be saved ; and seeing a key in one of the doors I turned it and went in, and found this dog of a Jew, who yielded himself as my prisoner. I was drinking a cup of wine to refresh myself when a wall and a roof fell in and blocked the passage. Thereupon I drank more wine to strengthen myself. I tried to convert the Jew before he should die, which made me thirsty once more, so I drank a little more wine, and exhausted with my exertions fell asleep, until these fellows found me. The Jew can bear witness.”

“ Isaac,” said the Captain, “ is this true ? Art thou converted ? ”

" Alas ! " replied the Jew, " I did not understand one word that he spoke to me."

At this the Friar would have beaten the Jew with the handle of his axe, had not the Black Knight stopped the blow, and thereby transferred the Holy Clerk's resentment to himself.

" Very well, friend," said the friar, clenching his huge fist, " I will give thee a cuff."

" I accept of no such presents," said the knight ; " I am content to take thy cuff as a loan, but I will repay thee with interest. It is but a friendly interchange of courtesy.—Strike if thou wishest. I will stand thy blow if thou wilt stand mine."

The friar bared his arm up to the elbow, and, putting his full strength to the blow, gave the knight a blow that might have felled an ox. But his adversary stood firm as a rock. A loud shout was uttered by all the outlaws, who knew by experience the weight of the hermit's fist.

" Now it is my turn," said the knight ; " stand still."

" If thou canst move me, I will give thee the Jew's ransom," answered the Friar. The knight's blow was given with such strength that the Friar rolled head over heels on the ground ; but he arose neither angry nor crestfallen.

" If thou had'st broken my jaw," he said, " I could have done no more praying. But I will exchange no more blows with you, having lost by the bargain. Let us see what we can make out of the Jew by way of ransom."

" First, " interrupted the Captain, " we have a prisoner of higher rank " ; and the Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx, who had been captured just before the battle, was led out.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WELL," said the Prior, "what ransom will you attempt to extort, from me, for travelling without a guard against thieves."

"Why not let the Jew name the Prior's ransom, and the Prior name the Jew's?" suggested Locksley's lieutenant.

"Thy plan is a good one," said the Captain. "Here, Jew, step forth—Look at that holy Father Aymer, Prior of the rich Abbey of Jorvaulx, and tell us at what ransom we should hold him?—Thou knowest the income of his convent, I warrant thee."

"O, assuredly," said Isaac. "I have traded with the good fathers, and bought wheat and barley, and also much wool. O, it is a rich abbey, and they do live well and drink good wine, these good fathers of Jorvaulx. Six hundred crowns," said Isaac, "the good Prior might well pay and never miss the amount."

"Six hundred crowns," said the leader gravely; "I am contented—thou hast well spoken, Isaac—six hundred crowns.—It is a sentence, Sir Prior."

"A sentence!—a sentence!" exclaimed the band.

"Thou hearest thy doom, Prior" said the leader.

"You are mad, my masters," said the Prior; "where am I to find such a sum? If I sell the very candlesticks on the altar at Jorvaulx, I shall scarcely raise the half."

"If so please you," said Isaac, willing to curry favour with the outlaws, "I can send to York for the six hundred crowns, out of certain moneys in my hands, if the most reverend Prior will give me a receipt."

"Very well, Isaac," said the Captain ; "thou shalt lay down the redemption money for Prior Aymer as well as for thyself."

"For myself ! ah, sirs," said the Jew, "I am a broken and impoverished man ; I should be a beggar even I were to pay you fifty crowns."

"The Prior shall judge of that matter," replied the Captain, "what say you, Father Aymer ? Can the Jew afford a good ransom ?"

"Can he afford a ransom ?" answered the Prior—"Is he not Isaac of York ? You will wrong yourselves if you take from him a penny under a thousand crowns."

"A sentence !—a sentence !" said the chief outlaw.

"A sentence !—a sentence !" shouted his followers ; "the Christian has dealt with us more generously than the Jew."

"The God of my fathers help me !" said the Jew ; "I am this day childless, and will ye deprive me of the means of livelihood ?"

"Thou wilt have the less to provide for, Jew, if thou art childless," said Aymer.

"Was not thy daughter dark-haired ?" said one of the outlaws ; "and did she not wear a veil embroidered with silver ?"

"She did !—she did !" said the old man, trembling with eagerness, as formerly with fear. "The blessing of Jacob be upon thee ! canst thou tell me aught of her safety ?"

"It was she, then," said the yeoman, "who was carried off by the proud Templar, when he broke through our ranks yesterday. I had drawn my bow to send a shaft after him, but spared him for the sake of the maiden, who I feared might be hurt."

"Oh !" exclaimed the Jew, "I would to God thou hadst shot, even though the arrow had slain her ! Better death than to be

in the power of the licentious Templar." And he groaned as if in bodily pain.

"Friends," said the chief, looking round, "the old man is but a Jew ; nevertheless his grief touches me. Isaac, we will take thee at the same ransom with Prior Aymer, or rather at one hundred crowns lower, and thou wilt have five hundred crowns remaining to treat for thy daughter's ransom.—Hasten to make thy crowns chink in the ear of De Bois-Guilbert, ere worse comes of it, for Templars love the glitter of gold as well as the sparkle of dark eyes. Thou wilt find him in the Preceptory at Templestowe." And taking the Jew aside he continued : " I advise thee to make a friend of this Prior, who has influence with De Bois-Guilbert. He needs money, and will do much to obtain it. I know that thou art not poor, for I have seen the vaulted chamber beneath the earth, in thy house at York. Fear nothing from me," he said, as the Jew grew pale," for I am the nameless yeoman thy daughter sheltered and healed years ago. That act of kindness has saved thee five-hundred crowns to-day. But spare not thy money to recover thy daughter."

Then he prevailed on the Prior, for a bag of silver, to write to the Templar persuading him that it would be well to give up the Jewess for the rich sum which Isaac was prepared to offer.

The Black Knight, who had seen with no small interest these various proceedings, now took his leave of the Outlaw in turn ; nor could he avoid expressing his surprise at having witnessed so much order and discipline amongst persons cast out from the ordinary protection and influence of the laws.

"Good fruit, Sir Knight," said the yeoman, "will sometimes grow on a poor tree ; and evil times are not always productive of evil alone. Amongst those who are drawn into this lawless state, there are, doubtless, numbers who desired its freedom, and some who regret, it may be, that they are obliged to enter it at all."

“And to one of those,” said the Knight, “I am now, I presume, speaking?”

“Sir Knight,” said the Outlaw, “we have each our secret. You are welcome to form your judgment of me. But as I do not ask to be admitted into your mystery, be not offended that I preserve my own.”

“Meanwhile we part friends, do we not?”

“There is my hand upon it,” said Locksley; “and I will call it the hand of a true Englishman, though an outlaw for the present.”

“And there is mine in return,” said the Knight, “and I hold, it honoured by being clasped with yours. For he that does good having the unlimited power to do evil, deserves praise not only for the good which he performs, but for the evil which he does not do. Fare thee well, gallant Outlaw!”

CHAPTER XXIV.

THERE was feasting in the Castle of York, to which Prince John had invited those nobles, high churchmen, and leaders, by whose aid he hoped to carry through his ambitious designs on his brother's throne. But their enterprise was delayed by the absence of some of the most important members of the confederacy. De Bracy, Front-de-Bœuf and Bois-Guilbert had not yet come. Isaac the Jew also seemed to have vanished, and with him the hope of certain sums of money, which were more necessary even than men.

The Prince was upbraiding these absentees when De Bracy burst into the hall, hot with hard riding.

“De Bracy,” said Prince John, “what means this?—Are the Saxons in rebellion?”

“Where is the Templar?” said Fitzurse, “Where Front-de-Bœuf?”

“The Templar has fled,” said De Bracy; “Front-de-Bœuf has found a grave among the blazing rafters of his own castle, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

“That is bad news,” said Fitzurse.

“The worst news is not yet said,” continued De Bracy; and coming up to Prince John, he uttered in a low and emphatic tone—“Richard is in England—I have seen and spoken with him.”

Prince John turned pale, tottered, and caught at the back of an oaken bench to support himself.

“Thou ravest, De Bracy,” said Fitzurse, “it cannot be.”

“It is as true as truth itself,” said De Bracy; “I was his prisoner, and spoke with him.”

"With Richard Plantagenet, sayest thou?" continued Fitzurse.

"With Richard Plantagenet," replied De Bracy, "with Richard Cœur-de-Lion—with Richard of England."

"And thou wert his prisoner?" said Waldemar; "he is then at the head of an army."

"No—only a few outlawed yeomen were around him, and to these his person is unknown. I heard him say he was about to depart from them. He joined them only to assist at the storming of Torquilstone."

"There is one path to safety," said John; "Richard is travelling alone. A few men can waylay him in the forest."

De Bracy however refused to take any part in murdering the generous king, who had pardoned him and spared his life. Waldemar Fitzurse, however, undertook the enterprise; and called for six men-at-arms to get ready to accompany him.

When he had gone to make his preparations and secure a guide, Prince John said to De Bracy, "I hope he remembers my orders not to harm my dear brother, but only to take him captive."

De Bracy saw through this base trick by which John hoped to escape from the responsibility of having ordered the King to be murdered. "I heard no such order given," he said, "nor, I am sure, did Fitzurse. I will go and tell him."

"No," replied the Prince impatiently, "he understands. There is no need."

Meanwhile Isaac the Jew had set out under the escort of two outlaws for Templestowe, the Preceptory or Monastery of the Templars, to which Bois-Guilbert had carried off Rebecca. He stayed for a night with a physician of his tribe, Nathan by name, who endeavoured to dissuade him from going to the Preceptory. From Nathan he heard how Lucas Beanmanoir, the Grand Master of the Order of Templars was at that very moment at

Templestowe, which he had visited because it was reputed to be the most corrupt of all the Preceptories, and scandalous lives were led by all its occupants, including the Preceptor, or Superintendent, Albert Malvoisin, a brother of Cedric's Norman neighbour.

"Other Templars may be tempted to abandon their ideals by pleasure or gold," said Nathau, "but he is strict and austere; and above all he hates our tribe."

Nevertheless Isaac presented himself at Templestowe with his letter for Bois-Guilbert from the Prior.

The Grand Master was at that moment walking in the gardens, when a squire entered, and, bowing profoundly before the Grand Master, stood silent, awaiting his permission to tell his errand.

"Speak, we permit thee—What is thine errand?"

"A Jew stands at the gate, reverend father," said the Squire, "who prays to speak with brother Brian de Bois-Guilbert."

"Thou wert right to give me knowledge of it," said the Grand Master. "Lead the Jew to our presence."

The squire departed, and in a few minutes returned with Isaac of York. When the Jew had approached within the distance of three yards, Beaumanoir made a sign with his staff that he should come no farther. The Jew stood before the Templars, his hands folded on his bosom, his head bowed on his breast.

"What is thy business with Brian de Bois-Guilbert?" Asked the Grand Master.

"I am bearer of a letter," stammered out the Jew, "to that good knight, from Prior Aymer of the Abbey of Jorvalx."

"Give me the letter," said Beaumanoir.

He then perused the letter in haste, with an expression of surprise and horror; read it over again more slowly; then holding it out to his companion exclaimed—"Here is goodly stuff for

one Christian man to write to another, and both members of religious professions.

The contents of the letter were indeed surprising, for the Prior after greeting Sir Brian continued : " I have heard that thou hast escaped with that lovely Jewish sorceress whom we saw at Ashby. I am glad of thy safety ; but be on thy guard, for your Grand Master is on his way to your Preceptory to stop your pleasures and amend your misdoings. Therefore I say, Beware ; and I advise thee to give up the damsel in return for the fat bag of gold which the Jew will offer thee." Then, turning to Isaac, the Grand Master said, " Thy daughter, then, is prisoner with Brian de Bois-Guilbert ?"

" Ay, reverend sir," stammered poor Isaac, " and whatever ransom a poor man may pay for her deliverance — "

" Peace !" said the Grand Master. " This thy daughter hath practised the art of healing, hath she not ? "

" Ay, gracious sir," answered the Jew.

" Where did she learn that secret ? " said Beaumanoir.

" From Miriam, a wise woman of our tribe."

" Ah, false Jew !" said the Grand Master ; " was it not from that same witch Miriam, whose enchantments have been heard of throughout every Christian land ? Her body was burned at a stake and her ashes were scattered to the four winds ; and I will do as much to her pupil, and more also ! I will teach her to throw spells over the soldiers of the blessed Temple.—Demian, throw this Jew from the gate. With his daughter we will deal as the Christian law and our own high office warrant."

Poor Isaac was hurried off accordingly, and expelled from the Preceptory ; all his entreaties and offers unheard and disregarded.

Meanwhile, the Grand Master ordered to his presence the Preceptor of Templestowe. When Albert Malvoisin appeared before him, he was regarded with unwonted sternness.

"There is in this mansion, dedicated to the purposes of the holy Order of the Temple," said the Grand Master, in a severe tone, "a Jewish sorceress, brought hither by a brother of religion, with your knowledge, Sir Preceptor."

"A Jewish sorceress!" echoed Albert Malvoisin; "good angels guard us!"

"Ay, brother, a Jewish sorceress!" said the Grand Master sternly. "I have said it. Darest thou deny that this Rebecca, the daughter of that wretched usurer Isaac of York, and the pupil of the foul witch Miriam, is now lodged within this thy Preceptory?"

"Your wisdom, reverend father," answered the Preceptor, "hath rolled away the darkness from my understanding. Much did I wonder that so good a knight as Brian de Bois-Guilbert should be so enslaved by the charms of this damsel. I dared not turn her away lest Sir Brian in his rashness should follow her, and be lost to us. But since your reverend wisdom hath discovered this Jewess to be a sorceress, perchance it may account for his folly."

"It doth!—it doth!" said Beaumanoir, "and this witch shall die."

"But the laws of England"—said the Preceptor, who, though delighted that the Grand Master's resentment, thus fortunately averted from himself and Bois-Guilbert, had taken another direction, began now to fear he was carrying it too far.

"The laws of England," interrupted Beaumanior, "permit each judge to execute justice within his own jurisdiction. And shall that power be denied to the Grand Master of the Temple within a Preceptory of this Order? No—we will judge and

condemn. Prepare the castle hall for the trial of the sorceress."

Malvoisin hastened to warn Bois-Guilbert, who had just returned from a fresh repulse by the Jewess.

"I have done as much for you," he said, "as I could. You are safe if you renounce Rebecca. He pities you as the victim of magic. She is regarded as a sorceress and is to die as such."

"She shall not, by Heaven!" said Bois-Guilbert.

"She must," replied Malvoisin. "The Grand Master, as thou knowest, has both the power and the will to do it."

"Thou speakest the truth, Malvoisin," said de Bois-Guilbert, after a moment's reflection. "And for Rebecca, she hath not deserved that I should lose rank and honour for her sake. I will cast her off; yes, I will leave her to her fate, unless——"

"Unless nothing," said Malvoisin. "But I must prepare the hall for the trial."

"What!" said Bois-Guilbert, "so soon?"

"Ay," replied the Preceptor, "trial moves rapidly on when the judge has determined the sentence beforehand."

"Rebecca," said Bois-Guilbert, when he was left alone, "thou art like to cost me dear—Why cannot I abandon thee to thy fate, as this calm hypocrite recommends?—One effort will I make to save thee—but beware of ingratitude! for if I am again repulsed, my vengeance shall equal my love. The life and honour of Bois-Guilbert must not be hazarded, where contempt and reproaches are his only reward."

CHAPTER XXV

THE ponderous castle-bell had tolled the point of noon, when Rebecca heard the trampling of feet upon the stair which led to her place of confinement. The noise announced the arrival of several persons, and the circumstance rather gave her joy ; for she was more afraid of the solitary visits of the fierce and passionate Bois Guilbert than of any evil that could befall her besides. The door of the chamber was unlocked, and the Preceptor Malvoisin entered, attended by four warders.

“ Daughter of an accursed race !” said the Preceptor, “ arise and follow us.”

“ Whither,” said Rebecca, “ and for what purpose ?”

“ Damsel,” answered Conrade, “ thou art to be brought before the tribunal of the Grand Master of our holy Order.”

“ May God be praised !” said Rebecca, folding her hands devoutly, “ the name of a judge, though an enemy to my people, is to me as the name of a protector.”

They descended the stair crossed a long gallery, and entered the great hall in which the Grand Master had for the time established his court of justice.

The lower part of this hall was filled with squires and attendants, who made way for Rebecca. As she passed through the crowd, a scrap of paper was thrust into her hand. She received it almost unconsciously, and continued to hold it without examining its contents. The assurance that she possessed some friend in this awful assembly gave her courage to look around.

On an elevated seat, directly before the accused, sat the Grand Master of the Temple, in full robes of flowing white. At his feet was placed a table, occupied by two chaplains whose duty it was

to record the proceedings of the day. The Knights of the Order occupied seats lower than that of their Superior. The remaining and lower part of the hall was filled with guards and with other attendants.

The Grand Master then raised his voice, and addressed the assembly.

“ Reverend and valiant Knights and Companions of this holy Order, we have summoned to our presence a Jewish woman, by name Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York—a woman infamous for witcheries ; whereby she hath maddened the blood, and hessotted the brain of a knight devoted to the service of the Holy Temple. Let those who have aught to witness of the life of this Jewish woman, stand forth before us.” There was a bustle in the lower part of the hall, and it appeared that there was in the crowd a man who had been bedridden, but whom the prisoner had restored to the perfect use of his limbs by a miraculous balsam.

The poor peasant, a Saxon by birth, was dragged forward to the bar, terrified by the consequences which he might have incurred by the guilt of having been cured of the palsy by a Jewish damsel. Perfectly cured he certainly was not, for he supported himself forward on crutches to give evidence. Most unwilling was his testimony, and given with many tears ; but he admitted that two years since, when residing at York, he was suddenly afflicted with a sore disease, while labouring for Isaac the rich Jew ; that he had been unable to stir from his bed until the remedies applied by Rebecca’s directions had in some degree restored him to the use of his limbs.

“ What is thy name, fellow ? ” said the Grand Master to the cripple.

“ Higg, the son of Snell,” answered the peasant.

“ Then, Higg, son of Snell,” said the Grand Master, “ I tell thee it is better to be bedridden, than to enjoy the benefit of unbelievers’ medicine.”

Higg, the son of Snell, withdrew into the crowd, but, interested in the fate of his benefactress, lingered until he should learn her doom, even at the risk of again encountering the frown of that severe judge.

The Grand Master now, in a solemn tone, demanded of Rebecca what she had to say against the sentence of condemnation which he was about to pronounce.

“ To invoke your pity,” said the lovely Jewess, with a voice tremulous with emotion, “ would, I am aware, be useless. I will not return the charge brought against me ;—but to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, I appeal, whether these accusations are not false ? as monstrous and calumnious as they are deadly ? ”

There was a panse ; all eyes turned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert. He was silent.

“ Speak,” she said, “ if thou art a man—if thou art a Christian, speak !—I conjure thee to say, are these things true ? ”

“ Answer her, brother,” said the Grand Master.

But Bois-Guilbert seemed agitated by contending passions, which almost convulsed his features, and it was with a constrained voice that at last he replied, looking to Rebecca,—“ The scroll !—the scroll ! ”

“ Ay,” said Beaumanoir, “ this is indeed testimony ! The victim of her witcheries can only name the fatal scroll, the spell inscribed on which is, doubtless, the cause of his silence.”

But Rebecca put another interpretation on the words ; and when all were looking wonderingly at Bois-Guilbert, glancing at the slip of parchment which she continued to hold in her hand, she read written thereupon in the Arabian character, *Demand a Champion !*

She then spoke out loudly :

“There is yet one chance of life left to me, even by your own fierce laws. I deny this charge—I maintain my innocence, and I challenge the privilege of trial by combat, and will appear by my champion.”

“And who, Rebecca,” replied the Grand Master, “will lay lance in rest for a sorceress? who will be the champion of a Jewess?”

“God will raise up a champion for me,” said Rebecca. “It is enough that I challenge the trial by combat—there lies my gage.”

She took her embroidered glove from her hand, and flung it down before the Grand Master with an air of mingled simplicity and dignity, which excited universal surprise and admiration.

“Give me her glove,” said Beaumanoir. “This is indeed,” he continued, as he looked at the flimsy texture and slender fingers, “a slight and frail gage for a purpose so deadly! Albert Malvoisin, give this gage of battle to Brian de Bois-Guilbert.—It is our charge to thee, brother,” he continued, addressing himself to Bois-Guilbert, “that thou do thy battle manfully, nothing doubting that the good cause shall triumph.—And do thou, Rebecca, take notice that we assign thee three days from the present to find a champion.”

“That is but brief space,” answered Rebecca, “for a stranger, who is also of another faith, to find one who will do battle, wagering life and honour for her cause, against an approved soldier.”

“We may not extend it,” answered the Grand Master.

Rebecca spoke not, but she looked up to heaven, and, folding her hands, remained for a minute without change of attitude. She then modestly reminded the Grand Master that she ought

to be permitted some opportunity of free communication with her friends, for the purpose of making her condition known to them, and procuring, if possible, some champion to fight in her behalf.

“It is just and lawful,” said the Grand Master ; “choose what messenger thou shalt trust, and he shall have free communication with thee in thy prison-chamber.”

“Is there,” said Rebecca, “any one here, who, either for love of a good cause, or for ample hire, will do the errand of a distressed damsel ?”

All were silent ; for none thought it safe, in the presence of the Grand Master, to confess any interest in the prisoner.

Rebecca stood for a few moments in indescribable anxiety, and then exclaimed, “Is it really thus ?—and, in English land, am I to be deprived of the poor chance of safety which remains to me, for want of an act of charity which would not be refused to the worst criminal ?”

Higg, the son of Snell, at length replied, “I am but a maimed man, but I will do thine errand, as well as a cripple can.”

“Seek out Isaac of York” said Rebecca—“Let him have this scroll.—I know that a champion will be found for me. Farewell ! Life and death are in thy haste.”

As it happened, he had no occasion to go far, for within a quarter of a mile he met with two riders, whom, by their dress and their huge yellow caps, he knew to be Jews ; and, on approaching more nearly, discovered that one of them was his old employer, Isaac of York. The other was the Rabbi Ben Samuel.

Isaac read the scroll which Higg offered, and uttering a deep groan, he fell from his mule like a dying man.

“Child of my old age !”—cried the old man, “O, Rebecca, the darkness of the shadow of death hath encompassed thee.”

The physician also took the letter which was as follows:—

“ My father, I am doomed to die for witchcraft. If a strong man can be found to do battle for my cause with sword and spear, within the lists of Templestowe, on the third day from this time, peradventure our fathers’ God will give him strength to defend the innocent, and her who hath none to help her. Wherefore, see whether there be any rescue. Wilfred, son of Cedric, might indeed bear arms in my behalf. But he cannot yet endure the weight of his armour. Nevertheless, send the tidings unto him, my father; for he hath favour among the strong men of his people, and he may find some one to do battle for my sake.”

“ Take courage,” said the Rabbi, “ Gird up thy loins, and seek out this Wilfred, the son of Cedric.”

“ I will seek him out,” said Isaac, “ for he is a good youth, and hath compassion.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEN the Black Knight left the Trysting-tree of the generous outlaw, he held his way straight to a neighbouring priory, to which the wounded Ivanhoe had been removed when the castle was taken, under the guidance of Gurth and Wamba. It is unnecessary at present to mention what took place in the meanwhile between Wilfred and his deliverer; suffice it to say that, after long and grave consultation, messengers were despatched in several directions, and that on the succeeding morning the Black Knight was about to set forth on his journey, accompanied by the jester Wamba, who attended as his guide.

“We will meet,” he said to Ivanhoe, “at Coningsburgh, the castle of the deceased Athelstane, since there thy father Cedric holds the funeral feast for his noble relation. I wish to see your Saxon kindred together, Sir Wilfred, and become better acquainted with them. Thou also wilt meet me; and it shall be my task to reconcile thee to thy father.”

So saying, he took an affectionate farewell of Ivanhoe, who expressed an anxious desire to attend his deliverer. But the Black Knight would not listen to the proposal. He extended his hand to Ivanhoe, mounted his horse, and departed, with Wamba for his companion.

The Black Champion and his guide were pacing at their leisure through the recesses of the forest; the good knight humming to himself, or sometimes encouraging by questions the prating disposition of his attendant. At the point of their journey at which we take them up, Wamba remarked to the knight that there were those in the forest who were far more dangerous for travellers to meet than the outlaws who usually frequented it.

“And, if I mistake not,” he continued, “there are some behind those bushes on the look out for us. I have twice or thrice noticed the flash of a helmet amongst the green leaves. Had they been honest men, they would have kept to the path.”

“By my faith,” said the knight, closing his visor, “I think thou art right.”

And in good time did he close it, for three arrows flew at the same instant from the suspected spot against his head and breast.

“Wamba,” said the knight, “let us close with them”—and he rode straight to the thicket. He was met by six or seven men-at-arms, who ran against him with their lances at full career. Three of the weapons struck against him, and splintered with as little effect as if they had been driven against a tower of steel. The Black Knight’s eyes seemed to flash fire. He raised himself in his stirrups with an air of inexpressible dignity, and exclaimed, “What means this, my masters?”—The men made no other reply than by drawing their swords and attacking him on every side, crying, “Die, tyrant!”

“Ha! Saint Edward! Ha! Saint George!” said the Black Knight, striking down a man at every invocation; “have we traitors here?”

His opponents, desperate as they were, bore back from an arm which carried death in every blow, and it seemed as if his single strength was about to gain the battle against such odds, when a knight in blue armour, who had hitherto kept himself behind the other assailants, spurred forward with his lance, and taking aim, not at the rider, but at the steed, wounded the noble animal mortally.

“That was a cowardly stroke!” exclaimed the Black Knight, as the steed fell to the earth, bearing his rider along with him.

At this moment Wamba sounded the bugle, which he had begged to be allowed to carry for the knight. The sudden sound made the murderers bear back once more, and Wamba did not hesitate to rush in and assist the Black Knight to rise.

“Shame on ye, false cowards!” exclaimed he in the blue armour, who seemed to lead the assailants; “do ye fly from the blast of a horn blown by a jester?”

Animated by his words, they attacked the Black Knight anew, whose best refuge was now to place his back against an oak, and defend himself with his sword. The cowardly knight, who had taken another spear, galloped against him in hopes to nail him with his lance against the tree, when his purpose was again intercepted by Wamba hamstringing his horse with a stroke of his sword. Horse and man went to the ground; yet the situation of the Black Knight continued very precarious, as he was pressed close by several men completely armed, and began to be fatigued by the violent exertions necessary to defend himself on so many points at nearly the same moment, when a grey-goose shaft suddenly stretched on the earth one of the most formidable of his assailants, and a band of outlaws broke forth from the glade, headed by Locksley and the jovial friar, who soon disposed of the ruffians. The Black Knight thanked his deliverer with a dignity they had not observed in his former bearing, which hitherto had seemed rather that of a blunt, bold soldier, than of a person of exalted rank.

“I wish now to discover, if I may,” he said, “who have been my unprovoked enemies.—Open the visor of that Blue Knight, who seems the chief of these villains.”

The Jester went up to the leader of the assassins, who entangled under the wounded steed, lay incapable either of flight or resistance.

He undid the helmet of the Blue Knight, which, rolling to a distance on the grass, displayed to the Black Knight a face he did not expect to have seen under such circumstances.

“ Waldemar Fitzurse ! ” he said in astonishment ; “ what could urge one of thy rank to so foul an undertaking ? Who set thee on to this deed ? ”

“ Thy brother,” answered Fitzurse.

“ Thou dost not ask thy life, Waldemar,” said the King.

“ He that is in the lion’s clutch,” answered Fitzurse, “ knows it is needless.”

“ Take it, then, unasked,” said Richard ; “ the lion preys not on prostrate carcasses.—Take thy life, but with this condition, that in three days thou shalt leave England, and go to hide thine infamy in thy Norman castle, and that thou wilt never mention the name of John of Anjou as connected with thy felony. If thou art found on English ground after the space I have allotted thee, thou diest. Let this knight have a steed, Locksley, for I see your men have caught those which were running loose, and let him depart unharmed.”

“ But that I judge I listen to a voice whose commands must not be disputed,” answered the yeoman, “ I would send a shaft after the villain that should spare him the labour of a long journey.”

“ Thou bearest an English heart, Locksley,” said the Black Knight, “ and well dost judge thou art bound to obey my command —I am Richard of England ! ”

At these words, pronounced in a tone of majesty suited to the high rank and no less distinguished character of Cœur-de-Lion, the yeomen at once kneeled down before him, and at the same time tendered their allegiance, and implored pardon for their offences.

“ Rise, my friends,” said Richard, in a gracious tone, looking on them with a countenance in which his habitual good-humour

had already conquered the blaze of hasty resentment. Your misdemeanours, whether in forest or field, have been atoned by the loyal services you rendered my distressed subjects before the walls of Torquilstone, and the rescue you have this day afforded to your sovereign. Arise, my liegemen, and be good subjects in future.—And thou, brave Locksley——”

“ Call me no longer Locksley, my Liege, but know me under the name, which, I fear, fame hath blown too widely not to have reached even your royal ears—I am Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest.”

“ King of outlaws, and prince of good fellows ! ” said the king ; “ who hath not heard a name that has been borne as far as Palestine ? But be assured, brave outlaw, that no deed done in our absence shall be remembered to thy disadvantage.”

Two additional personages now appeared on the scene. The new comers were Wilfred of Ivanhoe, and Gurth, who attended him. The astonishment of Ivanhoe was beyond bounds, when he saw his master besprinkled with blood, and six or seven dead bodies lying around in the little glade in which the battle had taken place. Nor was he less surprised to see Richard surrounded by so many outlaws of the forest—a perilous retinue for a prince. Richard saw his embarrassment.

“ Fear not, Wilfred,” he said, “ to address Richard Plantagenet as himself, since thou seest him in the company of true English hearts.”

“ Sir Wilfred of Ivanhoe,” said the gallant outlaw, stepping forward ; “ let me say somewhat proudly, that he hath not truer subjects than those who now stand around him.”

“ I cannot doubt it, brave man,” said Wilfred, “ since thou art of the number—But what mean these marks of death and danger ? ”

“There has been treason, Ivanhoe,” said the king ; “but, thanks to these brave men, treason hath met its reward.—But, now I remember, thou too art a traitor,” said Richard, smiling ; “a most disobedient traitor ; for were not our orders positive, that thou shouldst rest at the priory until thy wound was healed ? ”

“It is healed,” said Ivanhoe ; “it is not more than a scratch. But why, noble Prince, will you thus vex the hearts of your faithful servants, and expose your life by lonely journeys and rash adventures, as if it were of no more value than that of a mere knight-errant, who has no interest on earth but what lance and sword may procure him ? ”

“And Richard Plantagenet,” said the King, “desires no more fame than his good lance and sword may acquire him—and Richard Plantagenet is prouder of achieving an adventure with only his good sword and his good arm, than if he led to battle an army of a hundred thousand armed men.”

“But your kingdom, my Liege,” said Ivanhoe, “your kingdom is threatened with dissolution and civil war—your subjects menaced with every species of evil, if deprived of their sovereign in some of those dangers which it is your daily pleasure to incur, and from which you have but this moment narrowly escaped.”

Wilfred sighed, well knowing how vain it was to contend with the wild spirit of chivalry which so often impelled his master upon dangers which he might easily have avoided ; while Richard went on in conversation with Robin Hood.—“King of Outlaws,” he said, “have you no refreshment to offer to your brother sovereign ? ”

“In truth,” replied the Outlaw, “our larder is chiefly supplied with——” he stopped, and was somewhat embarrassed.

“With venison from my forest, I suppose ? ” said Richard gaily ; “better food at need there can be none—and truly, if a

king will not remain at home and slay his own game, methinks he should not brawl too loud if he finds it killed for him."

" If your Grace, then," said Robin, " will again honour with your presence one of Robin Hood's places of rendezvous, the venison shall not be lacking ; and it may be a cup of reasonably good wine."

The Outlaw accordingly led the way, followed by the Monarch, more happy, probably, in this chance meeting with Robin Hood and his foresters, than he would have been in again assuming his royal state, and presiding over a splendid circle of peers and nobles.

Beneath a huge oak tree the repast was hastily prepared for the King of England, surrounded by men, outlaws to his government, but who now formed his court and his guard. As the flagon went round, the rough foresters soon lost their awe for the presence of majesty. The song and the jest were exchanged—stories of former deeds were told and at length, and while boasting of their successful infraction of the laws, no one recollect ed they were speaking in presence of their natural guardian. The merry king, nothing heeding his dignity any more than his company, laughed, quaffed, and jested among the jolly band.

The repast, however, came at length to an end, the king exclaiming :—" Let us to horse and away—Wilfred has been impatient this hour. Let us merrily on to Coningsburgh," and extending his hand to Robin Hood, he assured him of his full pardon and future favour.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE king, attended by Ivanhoe, Gurth, and Wamba, arrived without any interruption within view of the castle of Coningsburgh, while the sun was yet in the horizon.

A huge black banner, which floated from the top of the tower, showed that the obsequies of the late owner were still being solemnized.

All around the castle was a scene of busy commotion ; for such funeral banquets were times of general and profuse hospitality, of which not only every one who could claim the most distant connection with the deceased, but all travellers whatsoever, were invited to partake.

Numerous parties, therefore, were seen ascending and descending the hill on which the castle was situated ; and when the king and his attendants entered the open and unguarded gates of the external barrier, the space within presented a busy scene. In one place cooks were roasting huge oxen and fat sheep ; in another, hogsheads of ale were set to be drained by all comers. Groups of every description were to be seen devouring the food and swallowing the liquor thus provided. Such was the scene in the castle-yard at Coningsburgh when it was entered by Richard and his followers. The seneschal or steward, holding in his hand his white wand of office, made way for Richard and Ivanhoe to the entrance of the tower. Ascending a flight of steps, they were ushered into the round apartment which occupied the whole of the third storey from the ground. Wilfred thus gained time to muffle his face in his mantle, as it had been held expedient that he should not present himself to his father until the king should give him the signal.

There were assembled in this apartment, around a large oaken table, about a dozen of the most distinguished representatives of the Saxon families in the adjacent countries.

Cedric, seated among his countrymen, seemed by common consent to act as chief of the assembly. Upon the entrance of Richard (only known to him as the Black Knight) he arose gravely, and gave him welcome.

"I crave to remind you, noble thane," the king said, "that when we last parted you promised, for the service I had the fortune to render you, to grant me a boon."

"It is granted ere named, noble knight," said Cedric; "yet, at this sad moment——."

"Of that also," said the king, "I have thought, but my time is brief.—As yet you have known me but as the Black Knight—Know me now as Richard Plantagenet."

"Richard of Anjou!" exclaimed Cedric, stepping backward with the utmost astonishment.

"No, noble Cedric—Richard of England!—whose deepest interest—whose deepest wish, is to see her sons united with each other; I request thee, as a man of thy word, to forgive and receive to thy paternal affection the good knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe."

"And this is Wilfred!" said Cedric, pointing to his son.

"My father!—my father!" said Ivanhoe, prostrating himself at Cedric's feet, "grant me thy forgiveness!"

"Thou hast it, my son," said Cedric, raising him up. "Cedric the Saxon knows how to keep his word, even when it has been passed to a Norman. But let me see thee use the dress of thy English ancestry. He that would be the son of Cedric must show himself of English ancestry.—Thou art about to speak," he added sternly, "and I guess the topic. The Lady Rowena must complete two years' mourning, as for a betrothed husband. The

ghost of Athelstane himself would burst from his grave, and stand before us to forbid such dishonour to his memory."

It seemed as if Cedric's words had raised a spectre ; for scarce had he uttered them ere the door flew open, and Athelstane, arrayed in the garments of the grave, stood before them, pale, haggard, and like something arisen from the dead !

The effect of this apparition on the persons present was utterly appalling. Cedric started back as far as the wall of the apartment would permit, and, leaning against it as one unable to support himself, gazed on the figure of his friend with eyes that seemed fixed, and a mouth which he appeared incapable of shutting.

"If thou art mortal, speak !" said Cedric, addressing what seemed the spectre of his departed friend.

"I will," said the spectre, very composedly, "when I have collected breath, and when you give me time. I am as much alive as he can be who has fed on bread and water for three days."

"Why, noble Athelstane," said the Black Knight, "I myself saw you struck down by the fierce Templar towards the end of the fight at Torquilstone, and Wamba reported that your skull was split down to the teeth."

"Wamba lied, Sir Knight," said Athelstane, "My teeth are in good order, as I will show at supper. The Templar's sword turned in his hand, so that the blade struck me with the flat instead of the edge. Down I went, stunned, indeed, but unwounded. Others, of both sides, were beaten down and slaughtered above me, so that I never recovered my senses until I found myself in a coffin--(an open one, by good luck)--placed before the altar of the church of Saint Edmund's. I sneezed repeatedly--groaned--awakened and would have arisen, when the Sacristan and Abbot, full of terror, came running at the

noise, surprised, doubtless, and no way pleased to find me alive ; for they were my heirs if I died unmarried. I asked for wine—they gave me some, but it must have been drugged, for I slept yet more deeply than before, and wakened not for many hours. Then I found my arms and my feet tied fast ; the place was utterly dark—the vault of their accursed convent. They gave me only bread and water, and I had to wait long for more of that. At last the Sacristan came, but he was so drunk with ale from my funeral feast that when he went he turned the lock before the door was properly closed. The ring to which my chains were attached was worn through with rust. I dragged myself upstairs, knocked down the drunken and startled sacristan unlocked my fetters with his key, drank some wine, found me own horse in their stable, and hither I came with all the speed I could—every one flying before me wherever I came, taking me for a spectre."

" And you have found me," said Cedric, " ready to resume our brave projects for the deliverance of the noble Saxon race."

" Talk not to me of delivering any one, said Athelstane ; " it is well I am delivered myself."

" For shame, noble Athelstane," said Cedric. " Tell this Norman prince, Richard of Anjou, that, lion-hearted as he is, he shall not hold undisputed the throne of Alfred while thou art alive to dispute it."

" How ! " Athelstane ; " is this the noble King Richard ? "

" It is Richard Plantagenet himself," said Cedric ; " yet coming hither as a guest, he may neither be injured nor detained prisoner—thou well knowest thy duty to him as his host."

" Ay ! " said Athelstane ; " and my duty as a subject besides, for I here tender him my allegiance, heart and hand."

" Think on the freedom of England, degenerate prince ! " said Cedric.

“ Friend,” said Athelstane, “ bread and water and a dungeon are marvellous mortifiers of ambition, and I rise from the tomb a wiser man than I descended into it.—I tell you, I will be king in my own domains, and no where else.”

“ And my ward Rowena,” said Cedric—“ I trust you intend not to desert her ?”

“ Cedric,” said Athelstane, “ be reasonable. The Lady Rowena cares not for me—she loves the little finger of my kinsman Wilfred’s glove better than my whole person. There she stands to admit it—Nay, blush not, kinswoman, there is no shame in loving a courtly knight better than a country franklin.—Here, cousin Wilfred of Ivanhoe, in thy favour I renounce—Hey ! our cousin Wilfred hath vanished !—Yet I saw him stand there a minute ago.”

All now looked round for Ivanhoe, but he had vanished. It was at length discovered that a Jew had been to seek him ; and that he had called for Gurth and his armour, and had left the castle.

A minute later it was found that King Richard was gone also, and no one knew whither. At length it was learned that he had hastened to the court-yard, summoned to his presence the Jew who had spoken with Ivanhoe, and, after a moment’s speech with him, had called for his horse and galloped off.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OUR scene now returns to the exterior of the Castle, or Preceptory of Templestowe, about the hour when the life or death of Rebecca was to be decided. It was a scene of bustle and life, as if the whole vicinity had poured forth its inhabitants to a rural feast.

A very considerable multitude had already surrounded the lists. The enclosure was formed on a piece of ground adjoining the Preceptory, which had been levelled with care for the exercise of military sports. It was palisaded around, and, as the Templars willingly invited spectators to be witnesses of their skill in feats of chivalry, was amply supplied with galleries and benches for their use.

On the present occasion a throne was erected for the Grand Master at the east end, surrounded with seats of distinction for the Knights of the Order.

At the opposite end of the lists was a pile of faggots, so arranged around a stake, deeply fixed in the ground, as to leave a space for the victim whom they were destined to consume to enter within the fatal circle, in order to be chained to the stake by the fetters which hung ready for the purpose.

The heavy bell of the church of Saint Michael of Templestowe now began to toll. The sullen sounds chilled with awe the hearts of the assembled multitude, whose eyes were now turned to the Preceptory, expecting the approach of the Grand Master, the champion, and the criminal.

At length the drawbridge fell, the gates opened, and a knight, bearing the great standard of the Order, rode out from the

castle, followed by the Knights, two and two, the Grand Master coming last, mounted on a stately horse. Behind him came Brian de Bois-Guilbert, in bright armour. He looked ghastly pale, as if he had not slept for several nights, yet reined his pawing war-horse with the habitual ease and grace proper to the best lance of the Order of the Temple.

The unfortunate Rebecca was conducted to the black chair placed near the pile. On her first glance at the terrible spot where preparations were being made for a death alike dismaying to the mind and painful to the body, she was observed to shudder and shut her eyes, praying internally, doubtless, for her lips moved, though no speech was heard. In the space of a minute she opened her eyes, looked fixedly on the pile as if to familiarize her mind with the object, and then slowly and naturally turned away her head.

Meanwhile, the Grand Master had assumed his seat; and when the Knights of his Order were placed around and behind him, each in his due rank, a loud and long flourish of the trumpets announced that the court was seated for judgment. Malvoisin then stepped forward and laid the glove of the Jewess, which was the pledge of battle, at the feet of the Grand Master.

“ Valorous lord, and reverend father,” said he, “ here stands the good knight, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Knight of the Order of the Temple, ready to do battle with any knight of free blood who will sustain the quarrel on behalf of the Jewess Rebecca.”

The trumpets again sounded, and there was a dead pause of many minutes.

“ No champion appears for the appellant,” said the Grand Master. “ Go, herald, and ask her whether she expects any one to do battle for her in this her cause.” The herald went to the chair in which Rebecca was seated, and Bois-Guilbert,

suddenly turning his horse's head toward that end of the lists, was by the side of Rebecca's chair as soon as the herald, who addressed her in these terms :—" Damsel, the Honourable and Reverend the Grand Master asks of thee, if thou art prepared with a champion to do battle this day in thy behalf, or if thou dost yield as one justly condemned to a deserved doom ? "

" Say to the Grand Master," replied Rebecca, " that I maintain my innocence, and do not yield as justly condemned lest I become guilty of mine own death. Say to him that I demand such delay as his forms will permit, to see if God will raise me up a deliverer ; and when such uttermost space is passed, may His holy will be done ! " The herald retired to carry this answer to the Grand Master.

" God forbid," said Lucas Beaumanoir, " that Jew or pagan should impeach us of injustice !—Until the shadows be cast from the west to the eastward, will we wait to see if a champion shall appear for this unfortunate woman. When the day is so far passed, let her prepare for death."

The herald communicated the words of the Grand Master to Rebecca, who bowed her head submissively, folded her arms and, looking up towards heaven, seemed to expect that aid from above which she could scarce promise herself from man. During this awful pause, the voice of Bois-Guilbert broke upon her ear—it was but a whisper, yet it startled her more than the summons of the herald had appeared to do.

" Rebecca," said the Templar, " dost thou hear me ? "

" I have nothing to do with thee, cruel, hard-hearted man," said the unfortunate maiden.

" Ay, but dost thou understand my words ? Hear me, Rebecca," he said, proceeding with animation ; " a better chance hast thou

for life and liberty than they dream of. Mount behind me on my steed, which never failed his rider ; mount, I say, behind me,—and in one short hour pursuit and inquiry will be far behind. A new world of pleasure opens to thee ; to me a new career of fame.

“ Tempter,” said Rebecca, “ begone !—not in this last extremity canst thou move me, surrounded as I am by foes. I hold thee as my worst and most deadly enemy.” They had now been two hours in the lists awaiting in vain the appearance of a champion.

But at this instant a knight, urging his horse to speed, appeared on the plain advancing towards the lists. A hundred voices exclaimed, “ A champion ! a champion ! ” And, despite the prepossessions and prejudices of the multitude, they shouted unanimously as the knight rode into the tilt-yard. The second glance, however, served to destroy the hope that his timely arrival had excited. His horse, urged for many miles to its utmost speed, appeared to reel from fatigue, and the rider, however undauntedly he presented himself in the lists, either from weakness, weariness, or both, seemed scarce able to support himself in the saddle.

To the summons of the herald who demanded his rank, his name, and purpose, the stranger knight answered readily and boldly, “ I am a good knight and noble, come hither to sustain with lance and sword the just and lawful quarrel of this damsel, Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York ; to uphold the doom pronounced against her to be false and to defy Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, as a traitor, murderer, and liar ; as I will prove in this field with my body against his.”

“ The stranger must first show,” said Malvoisin, “ that he is a good knight, and of honourable lineage. The Temple sends not forth her champions against nameless men.”

"My name," said the knight, raising his helmet, "is better known, my lineage more pure, Malvoisin, than thine own. I am Wilfred of Ivanhoe."

"I will not fight with thee at present," said the Templar, in a changed and hollow voice. "Get thy wounds healed, get a better horse, and it may be I will hold it worth my while to scourge out of thee this boyish spirit of bravado."

"Ha, proud Templar!" said Ivanhoe; "hast thou forgotten that twice didst thou fall before this lance? Remember the lists at Acre—remember the passage of arms at Ashby—remember thy proud vaunt in the halls of Rotherwood, that thou wouldest do battle with Wilfred of Ivanhoe, and recover the honour thou hadst lost! I will proclaim thee, Templar, a coward in every court in Europe unless thou do battle without further delay."

Bois-Guilbert turned his countenance irresolutely towards Rebecca, and then exclaimed, looking fiercely at Ivanhoe, "Dog of a Saxon! take thy lance, and prepare for the death thou hast drawn upon thee!"

"Does the Grand Master allow me the combat?" said Ivanhoe.

"I may not deny what thou hast challenged," said the Grand Master, "provided the maiden accepts thee as her champion. Yet I wish thou wert in better plight to do battle."

"Thus—thus I am, and not otherwise," said Ivanhoe; "it is the judgment of God—to His keeping I commend myself.—Rebecca," said he, riding up to the fatal chair, "dost thou accept me for thy champion?"

"I do," she said—"I do," fluttered by an emotion which the fear of death had been unable to produce, "I do accept thee as the champion whom Heaven hath sent me. Yet, no—no—thy wounds are uncured—Meet not that proud man—why shouldst thou perish also?"

But Ivanhoe was already at his post, and had closed his visor and seized his lance. Bois-Guilbert did the same.

The Grand Master, who held in his hand the gage of battle, Rebecca's glove, now threw it into the lists, and gave the signal.

The trumpets sounded, and the knights charged each other in full career. The wearied horse of Ivanhoe, and its no less exhausted rider, went down, as all had expected, before the well aimed lance and vigorous steed of the Templar. This issue of the combat all had foreseen; but although the spear of Ivanhoe did but, in comparison, touch the shield of Bois-Guilbert, that champion, to the astonishment of all who beheld reeled in his saddle, lost his stirrups, and fell in the lists.

Ivanhoe, extricating himself from his fallen horse, was soon on foot, hastening to mend his fortune with his sword; but his antagonist arose not. Wilfred, placing his foot on his breast, and the sword's point to his throat, commanded him to yield or die on the spot. Bois-Guilbert returned no answer.

"Slay him not, Sir Knight," cried the Grand Master, "We admit him to be vanquished."

He descended into the lists, and commanded them to unhelm the conquered champion. His eyes were fixed and glazed. Unscathed by the lance of his enemy, he had died a victim to the violence of his own contending passions.

"This is indeed the judgment of God," said the Grand Master.

When the first moments of surprise were over, Wilfred of Ivanhoe demanded of the Grand Master, as judge of the field, if he had manfully and righfully done his duty in the combat.

"Manfully and rightfully hath it been done," said the Grand Master; "I pronounce the maiden free and guiltless. The arms and armour of the defeated knight are at the disposal of the victor."

He was interrupted by a clattering of horses' feet, advancing in such numbers, and so rapidly, as to shake the ground before them; and the Black Knight galloped into the lists. He was followed by a numerous band of men-at-arms, and several knights in complete armour.

"I am too late," he said, looking around him. "I had intended Bois-Guilbert to be my own victim Ivanhoe, was this well, to take on thee such a venture, and thou scarcely able to keep thy saddle?"

"Heaven, my lord," answered Ivanhoe, "hath taken this proud man for its victim. He was not to be honoured in dying as your will had designed."

"Peace be with him," said Richard, looking on the corpse, "if it may be so—he was a gallant knight and has died in his armour full knight-like. But we must waste no time.—Bohun, do thy duty.

A knight stepped forward from the king's attendants, and, laying his hand on the shoulder of Albert de Malvoisin, said, "I Henry Bohun, Earl of Essex, Lord High Constable of England, arrest thee of high treason."

"Who dares to arrest a Templar in my presence?" said the Grand Master.

"He arrests Malvoisin," said the king, raising his visor; "by the order of Richard Plantagenet, here present. Malvoisin, thou diest with thy brother Philip, ere the world be a week older."

"I will resist thy sentence," said the Grand Master.

“Proud Templar,” said the king, “thou canst not—look up, and behold the royal standard of England floats over thy towers instead of thy Temple banner!—Be wise, Beaumanoir, and make no useless opposition.”

“I will appeal to Rome against thee,” said the Grand Master, “for disregard of the immunities and privileges of our Order.”

“Be it so,” said the king, “but for thine own sake tax me not with usurpation now. Depart with thy followers to thy next Preceptory (if thou canst find one), which has not been made the scene of treasonable conspiracy against the King of England.—Or, if thou wilt, remain, to share our hospitality, and behold our justice.”

“To be a guest in the house where I should command?” said the Templar; “never!—Knights and squires of the Holy Temple prepare to follow the banner.”

The Grand Master spoke with a dignity which confronted even that of England’s king himself, and inspired courage into his surprised and dismayed followers. They gathered around him like the sheep around the watch-dog, when they hear the baying of the wolf. But they showed none of the timidity of the scared flock—there were dark brows of defiance, and looks which menaced the hospitality they dared not to put into words.

The Earl of Essex, when he beheld them pause in their assembled force, dashed the rowels into his charger’s sides, and galloped backwards and forwards to array his followers in opposition to a band so formidable. Richard alone, as if he loved the danger his presence had provoked, rode slowly along the front of the Templars, calling aloud, “What, sirs! Among so many gallant knights, will none dare splinter a spear with Richard?”

“The Brethren of the Temple,” said the Grand Master, riding forward in advance of their body, “fight not on such an idle and profane quarrel—and not with thee, Richard of England, shall a

Templar cross lance in my presence. The Pope and princes of Europe shall judge our quarrel. If unassailed, we depart, assailing no one."

With these words the Grand Master gave the signal of departure. Their trumpets sounded and they moved off as slowly as their horses could step, as if to show it was only the will of their Grand Master, and no fear of the opposing force, which compelled them to withdraw.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DURING the tumult which attended the retreat of the Templars, Rebecca saw and heard nothing—she was locked in the arms of her aged father, giddy, and almost senseless, with the rapid change of circumstances around her. But one word from Isaac at length recalled her scattered feelings.

“Let us go,” he said, “my dear daughter, my recovered treasure—let us go to throw ourselves at the feet of the good youth.”

“Not so,” said Rebecca, “O no—no—no—I must not at this moment dare to speak to him.—Alas! I love him too much. I should say more than a maiden ought to say—No, my father, let us instantly leave this evil place.

—“Nay, but,” said Isaac, insisting, “they will deem us more thankless than mere dogs!”

“But thou seest, my dear father, that King Richard is there.”

“True, my wise Rebecca!—Let us hence—let us hence!—let us hence!—Money he will lack, for he has just returned from Palestine, and, as they say, from prison—and pretext for exacting it, should he need any, may rise out of my simple dealings with his brother John. Away, away, let us hence!” And, hurrying his daughter in his turn, he conducted her from the lists.

The Jewess, whose fortunes had formed the principal interest of the day, having now retired unobserved, the attention of the populace was transferred to the Black Knight. They now shouted “Long life to Richard with the Lion’s Heart, and down with the usurping Templars!”

“Notwithstanding all this lip-loyalty,” said Ivanhoe to the Earl of Essex, “it was well the King took precaution to bring thee with him, noble Earl, and so many of the trusty followers.”

The Earl smiled and shook his head.

“Gallant Ivanhoe,” said Essex, “dost thou know our Master so well, and yet think him capable of taking so wise a precaution! I was drawing towards York, having heard that Prince John was making head there, when I met King Richard, like a true knight-errant, galloping hither to achieve this adventure of the Templar and the Jewess, with his own single arm. I accompanied him with my band, almost despite his consent.”

“And what news from York, brave Earl?” said Ivanhoe “will the rebels stand against us there?”

“No more than December’s snow will stand against July’s sun,” said the Earl; “they are dispersing; and who should come posting to bring us the news, but John himself!”

“The traitor! the ungrateful, insolent traitor!” said Ivanhoe; “did not Richard order him into confinement?”

“O! he received him,” answered the Earl, “as if they had met after a hunting party; and, pointing to me and our men-at-arms, said, ‘Thou seest, brother, I have some angry men with me—thou hadst better go to our mother, carry her my dutous affection, and abide with her until men’s minds are pacified.’”

“And this was all he said?” enquired Ivanhoe; “would not any one say that this Prince invites men to treason by his clemency?”

“Just,” replied the Earl, “as the man may be said to invite death, who undertakes to fight a combat, having a dangerous wound unhealed.”

“I forgive thee the jest, Lord Earl,” said Ivanhoe; “but, remember, I hazarded but my own life—Richard, the welfare of his kingdom,”

“Those,” replied Essex, “who are specially careless of their own welfare, are seldom remarkably attentive to that of others—But let us haste to the castle, for Richard meditates punishing some of the

subordinate members of the conspiracy, though he has pardoned their principal."

Soon after the judicial combat, Cedric the Saxon was summoned to the court of Richard, which, for the purpose of quieting the countries that had been disturbed by the ambition of his brother, was then held at York. Cedric did not refuse obedience. In fact, the return of Richard had quenched every hope that he had entertained of restoring a Saxon dynasty in England; for, whatever head the Saxons might have made in the event of a civil war, it was plain that nothing could be done under the undisputed dominion of Richard, popular as he was by his personal good qualities and military fame, although his administration was wilfully careless, now too indulgent, and now allied to despotism.

Moreover, his project for the marriage of Rowena and Athelstane was now completely at an end, by the mutual dissent of both parties concerned. King Richard delighted in the blunt humour of Cedric, and so dealt with the noble Saxon, that, ere he had been a guest at court for seven days, he had given his consent to the marriage of his ward Rowena and his son Wilfred of Ivanhoe.

The nuptials of our hero, thus formally approved by his father, were celebrated in the noble minster of York. The king himself attended, and from the countenance which he afforded on this and other occasions to the hitherto degraded Saxons, gave them a safer and more certain prospect of attaining their just rights than they could reasonably hope from the doubtful chances of a civil war.

It was upon the second morning after this happy bridal, that the Lady Rowena was told that a damsel desired admission to her presence. Rowena commanded the damsel to be admitted. To the surprise of the Lady of Ivanhoe, her fair visitor kneeled on one knee, and, bending her head to the ground, in spite Rowena's resistance, kissed the hem of her garment.

" What means this, lady ? " said the surprised bride.

" Because to you, Lady of Ivanhoe," said Rebecca, rising and resuming the usual quiet dignity of her manner, " I may lawfully, and without rebuke, pay the debt of gratitude which I owe to Wilfred of Ivanhoe. I am the unhappy Jewess for whom your husband hazarded his life against such fearful odds in the tilt-yard of Templestowe."

" Damsel," said Rowena, " Wilfred of Ivanhoe on that day rendered back but in slight measure your unceasing charity towards him in his wounds and misfortunes. Speak, is there aught remains in which he or I can serve thee ? "

" Nothing," said Rebecca calmly, " unless you will transmit to him my grateful farewell."

" You leave England, then ? " said Rowena.

" I leave it, lady, ere this moon again changes."

" But you, maiden," said Rowena—" you who nursed the sick-bed of Ivanhoe can have nothing to fear in England, where Saxon and Norman will contend who shall most do you honour."

" Thy speech is fair, lady," said Rebecca, " and thy purpose fairer ; but it may not be. Farewell ! "

She stopped short—her eyes filled with tears. She hastily wiped them, and answered to the anxious inquiries of Rowena—" I am well, lady—well. But my heart swells when I think of Torquilstone and the lists of Templestowe.—Farewell. One, the most trifling part of my duty, remains undischarged. Accept this casket—be not startled at its contents."

Rowena opened the small silver-chased casket, and perceived a necklace of diamonds, which were obviously of immense value.

" It is impossible," she said, tendering back the casket. " I dare not accept a gift of such value."

" Yet keep it, lady," returned Rebecca.—" I will never wear jewels more."

" You are then unhappy !" said Rowena, struck with the manner in which Rebecca uttered the last words. But Rebecca had glided from the room.

Ivanhoe lived long and happily with Rowena, and distinguished himself in the service of Richard, and was graced with further marks of the royal favour. He might have risen still higher, but for the premature death of the heroic Cœur-de-Lion when fighting in France.

[THE END]

NOTES

Page 1. **Franklin**—one who was not, according to Norman ideas, of noble birth, but held his land free, i.e., without owing services or payments for it to anyone but the king.

Feudal duties—services due to an overlord.

- ,, 3. **Thrall**—an archaic word for 'slave.'
- ,, 4. **Gaiters**—coverings for the lower parts of the legs—calves and ankles.
- ,, 5. **Cistercian monk**—one of an order of monks who originally devoted themselves to a holy life of self-denial and of work for the poor, but afterwards became very rich. They were so-called from the name of their monastery at Citanx, in France.
- ,, 6-7. **Prior or Abbot**—head of a monastery, often called a priory or abbey, the latter being larger than the former, although often the names are used indiscriminately.
- ,, 7. **Right Reverend**—very reverend, a title given to those who hold high office in the church.

The Holy Sepulchre—the tomb in which the body of Christ was buried, near Jerusalem. One of the chief objects of the Crusades was to recover this. (See Introduction).

Knights Templars—See page 9.

- ,, 8. **The four regular orders of monks**—Benedictines, Cistercians, Cluniacs and Carthusians—wore only grey or dark-coloured gowns.

Linked mail—armour of interwoven steel rings or chain-work.

Page 8. **Squires**—young men of good family who acted as attendants to knights, and were themselves preparing to become Knights.

,, 9. **Jorvaulx**—in North Yorkshire.

,, 11. **Palmer**—one who had been on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and carried a branch of the palm-tree as a token of his visit.

,, 16. **Tournament or Tourney**—a form of military sport in vogue in the Middle Ages ; a contest in which knights mounted on horseback fought each other, usually with blunt weapons.

,, 20. **Saladin**—Sultan of Egypt and Syria, against whom the third Crusade was fought.

,, 21. **Crossing himself**—making the sign of the cross with his finger ; usually as a mark of reverence, but here to invoke the protection of God.

The Jews' inheritance—either their money or their country, *i.e.*, Palestine.

,, 23. **The Cross**—here used by a figure of speech (synecdoche) for the Christian religion.

This badge—*i.e.*, the badge of the Templars, who had sworn to defend the Holy Sepulchre.

The knights Hospitallers of St. John—a half military, half-monastic order like that of the Templars, so called from a hospital for pilgrims in Jerusalem.

,, 25. **Reliquary**—a small box, used to hold holy relics or objects of reverence.

,, 25. **The True Cross**—the Cross on which Christ was crucified.

,, 32. **Postern**—a small side or back-door or gate of a castle.

,, 41. **Pommel**—the knob on the hilt of a sword.

,, 44. **Free Companions**—professional soldiers who fought for hire on whichever side would pay them best.

Page 49. Yeomen—(i) strictly, small landholders of the middle class, or (ii) persons of a similar type, belonging to the country, as distinct from burgesses or citizens, who lived in a town or city.

Marshals of the field—the chief officers who directed the arrangements for the tournament.

- ,, 50. The arms of courtesy—arms with blunt points.
- ,, 52. Games of chivalry—tilting or jousting, in which armed knights rode at each other on horseback; these were introduced in England by the Normans.
- ,, 54. Confessed yourself—confessed your sins to a priest in order to be forgiven by heaven; one who had done this would be ready to meet death without fear.

Mass—an important part of the divine service in the Roman Catholic Church.

- ,, 55. Visor—a part of the helmet which protected the eyes; it consisted of bars through which the knight could see, and could be raised when actual fighting was not in progress.
- ,, 58. Ineognito—unknown.
- ,, 63. Zecchin—a gold coin equal to nearly seven rupees.
- ,, 67. The tale—the number.
- ,, 69. Would have—wishes to have.
- ,, 70. Quarter-staves—a quarter-staff, or pole about seven feet long, was a common weapon amongst the lower classes.
- ,, 72. Toll-free—without paying a tax. Toll was a tax for the use of a road.
- ,, 73. Seathe—harm or hurt.
Seatheless—unharmed; without being punished.
Seot-free—without having to pay, unpunished.
Doubly a thief—both as a member of an outlaw band, and as a miller, who steals much of the corn that is brought to his mill to be ground.

Page 74. Night-walkers—robbers.

,, 78. Mace—a heavy club, either iron-headed or altogether of iron.

,, 79. Generous—noble (lit. of good birth).

,, 80. The vulgar spectators—those belonging to the common people.

,, 86. Casque—helmet.

,, 87. Meed—reward (archaic).

,, 91. Noble—a silver coin worth about five rupees.

,, 92. Grandsire—grandfather (archaic).

,, 93. Notch—split.

,, 94. Livery—the uniform worn by servants. *Take livery* =take service.

,, 98. Manor—estate.
Fief—land held from the King in return for military and other services.

Hastings—the battle in which the English were defeated by William, Duke of Normandy, who became William I of England.

,, 99. A Toast—at feasts it is a custom for all to drink wine at the same moment to express their approval of a wish for the health or prosperity of some person ; this is drinking a toast.

,, 100. By my halidome—an oath. *Halidom*=a holy thing.

,, 106. Doff—take off.
Cowl—a monk's hood.

,, 107. Gage—wager.
Venison—deer's flesh.
Pasty—pie.
Waes hael—be thou in good health.

,, 109. Grooms—servants.

,, 112. Palfrey—a quiet horse for riding, especially of the kind used by ladies.
Sumpter-mules—mules for carrying baggage.

Page 113. Dingle—a small valley with many trees.

„ 115. Gallants—here, adventurers, or, ironically, fine gentlemen. (For the more common meaning, look at a Dictionary.)

„ 118. As if I wore golden spurs—as if I were a knight.

„ 119. Vow of celibacy—a vow not to marry.
Barbican—a small outwork or fortification to prevent a direct attack on the gate of a castle.

„ 129. The Church and the Synagogue—i.e., the Christian Church and the Jewish Church.
The best lance—the best knight. *Lance*=one who uses a lance, by the figure of Metonymy.

„ 133. Craven—Cowardly.

„ 139. Thane—the title of a Saxon of high rank who held his land in return for regular services in war.

„ 141. Byzant—a gold coin worth about seven rupees, so called from Byzantium, an earlier name of Constantinople.
Mark—a certain weight for money.

„ 146. Ensign—flag or banner.
Saint George—the patron Saint of England (legendary).

„ 151. Sally—a rush made by the besieged in order to attack the besiegers.
Coping-stones—the larger stones at the top of the walls.

„ 153. Poniard—dagger.

„ 158. Rendezvous—meeting.

„ 167. Preceptory—the monasteries of the Templars were governed by Preceptors, and so were called Preceptories.

„ 176. Palsy—paralysis.

„ 177. The Scroll—literally, a roll of parchment; here referring to the small piece of paper that had been placed in Rebecca's hand.

Page 178. Trial by combat, champion—*see* Introduction.
 Gage—token of challenge.

,, 179. Rabbi—a title given to certain Jews learned in their laws and customs, and having authority to perform certain ceremonies of their religion. (Roughly corresponding to Maulvi.)

,, 181. Trysting-tree—meeting place.

,, 182. My masters—Sirs.

,, 183. Hamstringing—laming by cutting the chief leg-tendon behind the knee.
 Grey-goose shaft—an arrow trimmed with the feathers of a grey goose.

,, 185. Liegemen—subjects.
 Liege—lord.

,, 188. Hogshead—a large cask.

,, 190. Sacristan—the official who had charge of the belongings of a monastery or church.

,, 192. Are mortifiers of—bring into subjection, cause to die.

,, 194. The Appellant—Rebecca, who had appealed for the right of trial by combat—an appeal to Heaven.

,, 195. Impeach—accuse.

,, 196. Tilt-yard—the enclosure in which the tilting took place.
 Doom—judgment.

,, 198. Unhelm—take off his helmet.

,, 199. Plantagenet—a family name of Henry II and his descendants.

,, 200. To Rome—to the Pope as head of the Roman Catholic Church.